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NEW STATESMAN

SUMMER BOOKS

Nixon's Version: all you need to know

Larkin: Woddis Fenton: Light Verse

George Macdonald Fraser on Gordon of Khartoum

Ambassador College

Clive James on the politics of self-deceit

Stephen Jessel

Mobutu's friends

JUL 25 1978
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Richard Cobb on Montaillou

'Ladurie has succeeded in bringing back to life . . the population of an early 14th century hill village'

The Freedom of the Mortgage Bosses

As this week ends, the leaders of Britain's building societies are deciding whether or not to increase the mortgage rate. It is an important business for the four-and-a-half million households who are paying off a mortgage: a one per cent increase in the rate adds about £7 a month to the cost of a £10,000 debt. But the decision, whichever way it goes – and however long it sticks – will be made by a small group of highly-paid executives who are in practice answerable to no-one except themselves. The Government has washed its hands of the whole affair: the Treasury takes the view that the wishes of the building societies cannot effectively be challenged.

The societies would like us to believe that the general rising of interest rates forces them into increasing their own rate – either now, or sometime very shortly. But there is nothing in the present financial climate to make such a decision necessary. The pressure for a rate rise has more to do with the societies' desire to preserve their autocratic freedoms than with the arithmetic of housing finance.

Just now the societies are lending £700 million a month: roughly twice the inflow of deposits being received. But at the end of April they had some £7,000 million cash. This liquidity constitutes more than 20 per cent of the societies' total assets, and is falling at a rate of less than one-half per cent per month. So it would take about ten months for the societies' liquidity ratio to fall below the 15 per cent which the Registrar of Friendly Societies likes them to maintain, and which is itself twice the minimum laid down in trustee law. Prudence does not require them to make any immediate upward twist in the spiral of our society's expenses.

Anxiety to preserve the fatness of cash balances arises from memories of the occasion four years ago, when the liquidity ratio did slip below 15 per cent, and the societies had to borrow £500 million from the government to prevent a rise in the rate. They do not wish to become beholden in such a way again: keeping plenty of cash in hand may be hard on the householder, but it insures the societies themselves against political risk.

Generally, they have been astonishingly successful in keeping themselves to themselves. Although they are now bigger than the clearing banks (who have deposits of not quite £30,000 million) the building societies suffer no control from the Bank of England. Their liberties are the more remarkable in that they have a virtual monopoly in their field, that the three biggest societies – Halifax, Abbey and Nationwide – control over two-fifths of the movement's funds, and that they operate a fairly effective price-fixing cartel. As they are friendly societies, they have no ordinary shareholders, and so all of their after-tax profits – perhaps £500 million last year – go to increase reserves, and therefore lending-power. They are less amenable to internal control than ordinary joint-stock companies, for the members of building societies – the depositors and borrowers – are even less organisable than the shareholders of joint-stock companies. Just in case, most societies have rule-books which make rebellion virtually impossible.

The huge, self-perpetuating bureaucracies which result are free to conduct their affairs on excessively conservative lines. Last year the Nationwide made a provision of £50,000 for losses on its £2,200 million of loans. Such a policy is typical of the building-society movement: it would make the most cautious of clearing-bankers look adventurous, and it leaves little room for prospective house-buyers who do not fit handily into the pattern of the young couple, with savings already in the society, who aspire to buy from a Wimpey-like developer.

That is a perfectly reasonable aspiration, of course. But it is also perfectly reasonable for someone to want to buy an old house, or a flat in an old house in the centre of a

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city. It is perfectly reasonable for someone who hasn't saved with a building society to want to buy a house. Too often, in the cause of reducing their risks to vanishing-point, the building societies become the unaccountable arbiters of what sort of lives we should lead, where, and in what sort of houses.

It is true that some societies, rather belatedly, have begun to co-operate with inner-city local authority. But for many urban areas, it is too late for the building societies to remedy the damage they have done, and for others it soon will be. The fact is that some considerable part of our social policy depends on the whims and prejudices of building society managers – and experience has shown that they can be as whimsical as the rest of us.

The least we should expect of a Labour government – even if it feels it can do nothing about this week's interest rate – is that it should begin to think about ways of making the building societies answerable to the public.

Notes on Politics and Power

SALT: an each-way bet on a new arms race

Nelson Mews writes: For 15 months the Carter administration has been trying to reach a strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT) with the Soviet Union. After a disastrous beginning in March last year when the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko rejected the American proposals for 'deep cuts' out of hand, the negotiators are now very near to agreement. Unless there is a last minute hitch President Carter and Secretary Brezhnev will probably sign SALT TWO at their first summit meeting later this summer. The treaty is, of course, designed to slow down and eventually reverse the arms race while preserving a safe nuclear balance between the superpowers. But ironically the US Senate may demand and get a new and more deadly arms race as its price for ratifying SALT II – that's if it doesn't throw out the treaty entirely. That would be a tragedy because although the SALT II proposals are a long way from the 'deep cuts' President Carter sought originally, they are a clear advance on the interim Vladivostok agreement which expired last October. For the first time missile totals will go down.

The new agreement will be in three parts – the treaty itself which will run till 1985; a protocol which will run for three years and a statement of principles for future negotiations. The main part of the treaty will lower the permitted total of strategic nuclear launch vehicles – that is land- and submarine-launched ICBM's and heavy bombers – from the Vladivostok ceiling of 2,400 a side to 2,250. The Soviet Union currently has 2,380 SNLV's and will therefore have to scrap nearly 150 of its older heavy missiles. Of the new 2,250 SNLV's total only 1,320 launchers will be permitted to carry multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles, or MIRV's. This is the same total agreed at Vladivostok but the US has agreed to count up to 120 bombers armed with Cruise missiles against this total. So at least one configuration of the Cruise is included in SALT for the first time. There will be further sub-ceilings on heavy land-based ICBM's but they won't result in cut-backs, and the treaty will also contain provisions for verification.

Under the protocol the testing and deployment of mobile ICBM's and long range land- and sea-launched Cruise missiles will be prohibited and testing and deployment of new ballistic missiles will be limited to one each. The protocol is not really much of an advance as it doesn't stop development of new weapons, only their testing and deployment and anyway the big mobile ICBM's, like the American MX, will not be ready to test till after the protocol expires. So no-one is making any great sacrifices in this part of the agreement.

The final part of the SALT II agreement will be a statement of principles for SALT THREE. The Americans want it to include new, lower missile ceilings; the Russians would rather leave it vague about numbers but would like it to acknowledge that US tactical weapons capable of reaching the Soviet Union from Europe would be counted in SALT II. These relatively minor differences are still to be resolved but the Carter administration will certainly not let them stand in the way of a SALT II agreement with the Russians. What might stand in the way of it are some major differences the Carter administration has with Americans. Before the treaty can come into force it must be ratified by the Senate with a two-thirds majority. And at the moment at least there is nothing like a two-thirds majority for SALT II.

Senators to whom I talked, both Democrats and Republicans, are worried by three things. They think Soviet adventures in Africa are incompatible with a new SALT agreement: they think America has traded away too much for too few concessions from the Soviets and they think that anyway Russia will cheat on any agreement. Whether these charges are true or not, and on balance they probably are not, the administration will have a very hard time convincing them. If it fails to convince the Senate, or two-thirds of it, we'll be in for a new arms race.

An arms race using the technology of the 1980's like mobile missiles, charged particle beams and killer-satellites would be vastly more dangerous than anything that's gone before because virtually all of these weapons would be de-stabilising. Mr Paul Warnke, the chief US arms negotiator told me he was still optimistic his painfully negotiated agreement could be steered through the Senate. But even if he's right the Senate will demand a price. The price they have in mind at the moment, I was told by members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, is a dramatic increase in defence spending on weapons not covered by SALT. If that happened Russia would have to follow suit.

So, as Damon Runyon's narrator used to say: 'The best you can get is the worst of it.' If the Senate throws out SALT II the world's in for a new arms race; if it ratifies the treaty, the price it may demand is – a new arms race.

Cyprus: NATO and Turkish colonialism

Christopher Hitchens writes: Last month the NS drew attention in its editorial to the much-overlooked political fact that many Turkish Cypriots are fed up with mainland Turkish occupation. Confirmation of this came with unexpected speed. In a series of articles in his own paper *Halkin Sesi* (Voice of the People), Dr Fazil Kuchuk, one of the leaders of the Turkish Cypriot community and a former Vice-President, denounced the policy of settling colonists from the Turkish mainland. 'They have transformed this paradise island into hell,' he said. These are blunt words for a leading Turkish Cypriot to employ at a time when the Turkish leadership is trying to impress the outside world with its proposals, and it must be assumed that he feels public opinion to be on his side. *The Times*, which reported the whole story on its front page, made only one error, in saying that it was the first public protest from a leading Turkish Cypriot. In fact, Dr Kuchuk among others has often denounced the bringing of settlers, the corrupt way in

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which they are awarded stolen Greek farms and property, and the political patronage system built up thereby. It seems that as many as 40,000 colonists may have been imported from Anatolia in an attempt to alter the demographic balance in Turkey's favour. Actually, as long ago as 1975 the semi-official Turkish bulletin *Pulse* wrote that the 120,000 Turkish population 'will reach 200,000 by the end of the year and time will see to the equalisation process'. This grotesque policy is being carried out under the auspices of the Turkish army, against the will of all Cypriots of either nationality. It is this same army which NATO considers to be dangerously ill-equipped. Perhaps it could choose between NATO duties and colonial duties?

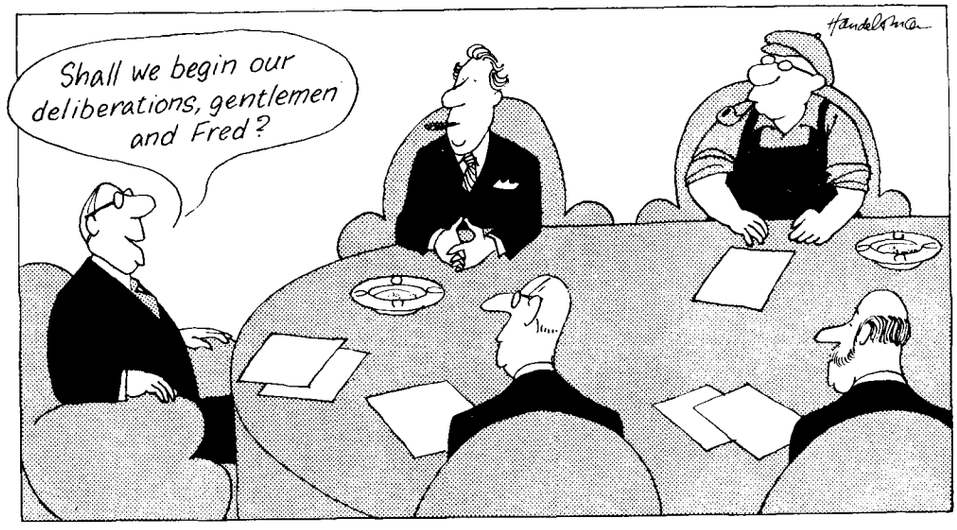
Teaching: three years of useless negotiation?

Tim Albert writes: Later this year the first copies of a new codified document of conditions of service for teachers will be distributed to local authority offices and school staff rooms. But although the document was only agreed after lengthy negotiations by teachers and local authority representatives, there has now emerged a loophole which may allow recalcitrant local education authorities to deny that they are binding. The whole saga illustrates the problems caused by our slavish adherence to a decentralised education service.

The negotiations took over three years, in a working party reporting to what is called the CLEA/ST committee (Council of Local Education Authorities/School-teachers committee), a body made up of representatives of the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities on the one hand, and recognised teacher union representatives on the other. They sifted through various local and national agreements, and eventually came up with an agreed code, covering such aspects as appointments and resignations, grievances and disciplinary procedures.

So far so good. But the two local authority organisations then took the matter to counsel. Counsel for the AMA advised that they could ratify the document, but his counterpart for the ACC demurred. He argued that they could ratify the document if they wished (they have now done so), but pointed out that the way could be clear for individual education authorities to argue that it was not binding on them – on the grounds that CLEA only had the right to negotiate on the part of authorities if they had specifically said so in advance. Which had not happened.

The answer now is for CLEA to ask local education authorities to give their assent now. But what if some of them decide that they do not wish to do so? Not only are the teacher unions understandably annoyed that for three years they have been negotiating with a body which, strictly speaking, had no right to negotiate with them, but also the NUT at least are prepared to go to court if necessary to settle the matter. As so often, the only winners may yet prove to be the lawyers.



One-half a cheer for the SNP

Brian Wilson writes: It has been a bad week for Scottish Patriots – first Hamilton and then Cordoba. But whereas the football humiliation was complete the SNP can extract some crumbs of legitimate comfort from the by-election result. Mrs. Margo McDonald's smiles after the declaration of the result were not solely for the benefit of the television cameras. There was genuine nationalist relief that the result was not much, much worse for them, as everyone's canvassing returns had suggested it would be. The Nationalists are now at their lowest ebb for several years but, as their publicity vice-chairman Steven Maxwell pointed out: 'When we last had a setback, in 1971, the baseline of our support was 15 per cent. Now it seems to be about 30 per cent. That's not a bad starting point once the optimism has evaporated about the way the economy is going.'

Academic freedom and the 'efficiency bar'

Paul Flather writes: For six weeks a lecturer in the German department of Sheffield University, Michael McColgan, has been fighting an internal recommendation that he be dismissed for allegedly 'failing to undertake enough scholarly research'. The university governing body, the Senate, decided this week to defer its final decision – normal procedure is to endorse such recommendations – to a special sub-committee to meet later this month.

The case is unprecedented in any British university, and virtually amounts to a claim that McColgan – a lecturer since 1964 – has not fulfilled the 'productivity requirements' of his job as an academic. But the fact that he is also an active Maoist, prominent in current anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigns in the city and on the campus, much involved in the recent overseas students campaigns against discriminating fees, has given the case political overtones.

Since 1971 McColgan has been held at what is termed the 'efficiency bar' – the point at which all lecturers are assessed in their abilities to teach, administer and research – and his salary has been restricted accordingly. The university's normal minimum criteria for passing the bar are obtaining a higher research degree or having two scholarly publications. McColgan has only a BA degree, but since serious proceedings against him began last year, he has had two articles accepted by *Gulliver* and *New German Studies*. He says the case against him no longer stands up. 'There are many other lecturers who have done less research than I have and they are not in this position.' He also had a translation of the political writings 1919-29 of the Marxist philosopher, Georg Lukacs, published in 1972 – something the university has dismissed as purely a linguistic exercise, incensing many other lecturers at the university.

The majority of students in the German department are angry that his ability as a 'stimulating and committed' teacher is not being given enough consideration and that they, 'as the ones who should know', have not been consulted; his union ASTMS are also dissatisfied with a procedure that 'first sacks him and then asks him to justify why he should not be sacked after all'.

The Campaign of Academic Freedom and Democracy, an academic defence body, are also supporting McColgan, and CAFD President and fellow politics lecturer at Sheffield Anthony Arblaster, describes the case as sinister and manifestly unjust. 'The university seems to be enforcing an undeclared rule that a lecturer can be dismissed if he does not pass the bar within a certain time. It is a case with serious implications, and could be used to trap "unpopular" lecturers throughout the country,' he says.

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Stephen Jessel: The West Debates Mobutu's 'Moderation'

It was early on Tuesday morning when they left the Quai D'Orsay's outpost in the Avenue Kleber: Foreign Office officials and embassy ministers sliding into their official cars after fourteen hours of talks. They had nothing to tell those of us waiting there beyond the bland diplomatic banalities, no account to give of this strange, hurried conference attended by five Western countries – the United States, France, Belgium, West Germany and Britain, to take stock of the turbulent events in Central Africa. They had, it is true, agreed on certain unsurprising verities: that the West should furnish discreet logistical help to a pan-African force: that Mobutu of Zaire was worth supporting provided the worst excesses of his regime were cleaned up or at least concealed, that they'd all be seeing each other again.

It was a meeting convened in haste, a gesture designed to indicate a firm Western reaction to what was agreed to be a serious threat to the stability and security of 'moderate' African states, but with little hard thinking beyond that point of departure. The thoughts of President Senghor of Senegal, the most Francophile of all African leaders, to the effect that unless the West awoke soon an inexorable red tide would wash across Africa, were widely quoted. Hence the enthusiasm of the French, articulated by the Foreign minister Louis de Guiringaud, who dwells normally in the deep shadow cast by Giscard d'Estaing, for interlocking the question of African development with the issue of security: security in this context being the enforcement of the *Pax Gallica* by black or brown French-speaking troops supplied, in some cases with a clear lack of enthusiasm, by Morocco, Senegal, Gabon and Togo. The other Western countries were plainly less than convinced by this approach. The British and the Americans seem to have agreed the case that a better way of supporting 'moderate' regimes in Africa – and the question of the degree to which the Mobutu regime in Zaire can reasonably be so described is an important one – is to make poor countries less poor, a process that involves spending money not on flying troops around Africa to intervene, too late and probably fruitlessly, against insurgents or rebels or terrorists but on improving the infrastructure, economies and living standards of the countries under threat.

In any case the position of the French, whose child the conference was, is riddled with inconsistencies. Giscard has a declared passion for Africa and for African policy, expressed in his wish that Africa should be for the Africans. It is not easy to reconcile that declaration with his equally enthusiastic support for a black Francophone peace keeping force, to be led, it is whispered, by French officers. The official explanation is offered on two levels. The first, for public consumption, is that France is doing no more in Africa than observing inescapable treaty obligations and hence the military presence in Chad, Mauretania, Zaire, Djibouti, Senegal, etc. Off the record the argument says that since the Americans are too shattered by their experience in Vietnam to resist Russian opportunism, the British are too obsessed with Rhodesia, and the Belgians are plain wet, it's up to France with her special ties with black Africa to ensure that someone puts some sort of resistance to Russo-Cuban neo-imperialism.

De Guiringaud makes the point that France does not offer support to governments but to states, the implication being that in sustaining the regimes in Chad and Zaire, France is doing no more than execute OAU policy: that however nonsensical colonial borders may be in geopolitical terms they must be observed if Africa is not to collapse into an anarchy of feuding tribal interests. Therefore, runs the argument, French intervention in Chad against Libyan-backed tribesmen from the north on behalf of President Felix Malloum, who at best controls less than half the country, or on behalf of General Mobutu, one of the world's most wealthy men, implies no unconditional support for their regimes. For a nation which spends as much time as France on congratulating itself on its gift for logic, there is an intriguing inability to distinguish between necessary and contingent elements of national independence.

That said, it must be acknowledged that Mobutu is in many respects a remarkable man. To remain in charge of a cartographer's fiction like the state of Zaire for 13 years is no small achievement. To play off Western politicians against each other as Mobutu does argues a formidable grasp of at least one aspect of statesmanship. By the standards of the Emperor Bokassa to the north and General Amin to the east he is not particularly bloodthirsty. While favouring his own people from Equateur province he has kept – so far – Zaire from collapsing into tribal warfare: though at some stage the West will have to come to terms with the fact that while there was and is substantial Cuban involvement in the fighting in Shaba, tribal loyalties among the Lunda people of northern Zambia, Angola and southern Zaire have to be taken into account. The hundreds of rebels being hidden in the African shanty towns around Kolwezi and Lubumbashi owe their safety to their tribal identity and not their ideological commitment.

But Mobutu also presides over a country, blessed with vast natural wealth in the form of copper, cobalt, diamonds and coffee, much of which is richly fertile, where life for most people, especially city dwellers, is one of intolerable misery. Even by the standards of the most rotten dictatorships of Latin America, corruption is hideous. Inflation is running at about 80 per cent a year though wage increases have been held down, on the sound principles of good economic management, to a quarter of that. By any standard prices are breathtaking. A 25 minute taxi ride to the airport costs £20 at the official rate. A meal at a cheap restaurant with a bottle of beer £7: a tin of vegetables imported of all places from Switzerland nearly £2. These prices are perhaps of most interest to the foreigner, since they have little meaning to people who have to pay a month's wages for a sack of manioc, the basis of most people's diet, the price of which has recently doubled. Flour and sugar are hard to find: the price of cooking oil has quadrupled.

From the Belgians who scuttled from the country, the Zairois received at least an expert training in corruption. It starts at the top with Mobutu himself who is estimated by Western diplomats to reserve about 30 per cent of the gross domestic product for his own privy purse. It spreads throughout the black bureaucracy and the white entrepreneurial community down to the hotel switchboard operator demanding £15 to connect a call, and the ragged children whom you bribe with a few Makuta not to scratch your car. It is wise to keep a handful of Zaires (which may not be exported) to leave with the immigration authorities to ensure a smooth departure.

To be fair, Mobutu does spread some of his wealth about. Fortunate the village where he arrives like a mediaeval king, his courtiers distributing sheaves of five and ten Zaire notes to the dazed farmers: fortunate, too, the vast, ramshackle army whose loyalty but not efficiency he buys.

It's a matter for lethargic speculation among Western observers whether corruption or mismanagement is the chief cause of the bankruptcy of a state potentially among Africa's richest. The country desperately needs both the $220 million interbank loan organized by a consortium of private banks and the IMF loan which is to be the centrepiece of next week's Brussels conference for which the Paris meeting to some extent served as a curtainraiser. The neat-suited men from the IMF went to Kinshasa to look at the books. Books found they none. GDP is thought to be falling at about 5 per cent a year. Unemployment among young town dwellers is thought to be around 80 per cent. Even if the mines of Shaba were operating at full stretch and there was a roaring world boom, the case of Zaire would be virtually hopeless. Since, after 18 years of independence, Europeans are needed to run the mines, and since they have left in their hundreds and thousands, the mines will operate for the foreseeable future at about a third of capacity.

And yet Mobutu has some cards to play. The opposition to him, based in Brussels, is fragmented and to some extent secessionist, which strengthens him vis a vis the OAU. He knows that Belgian, French, West German and British interests have little choice but to support him, all the alternatives to him being from the point of view of those interests infinitely less desirable. Doubtless these interests would be once again attracted by the idea of an independent Katanga: but not a Katanga run by Angolans rather than the mining interests.

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Tony Craig: Unhappy headhunting in East London's dockland

London's docklands are ailing and may be near death. TONY CRAIG *reports on the problems which beset official attempts at resuscitation.* ANNA COOTE *examines the latest plan for a surgical cure, which could prove fatal.*

Bureaucratic nightmare

The regeneration of London's docklands – effectively the building of a new city over more than eight square miles of wasteland in the heart of the capital – could be one of the most exciting urban projects of the century. Nowhere else in the country is there a barren prime site of such proportions. It is bigger than any of the new towns and the development programme is expected to cost more than £1,700 million at 1976 prices, made up of £1,100 million from public funds plus private investment of £600 million. But all is not going to plan, for the structure of local government and the complex interrelationships between the various local authorities and other agencies involved, have created an inertia which threatens to prevent this derelict area from bearing real fruit.

The problems have been highlighted recently by the disclosure that no-one suitable can be found to accept the top job of Docklands Manager, despite the offer of a £24,000 a year salary. And the Docklands Team charged with reviving the area, has become disheartened. Seven of the original members have left and not been replaced.

What is happening in the docklands is the most glaring example of a structural malaise which is also hindering any effective revival of Glasgow's East End and which may also hamper the regeneration of Liverpool's docks, now in a state of decline.

London's docklands are a bureaucratic nightmare. The area falls in five separate London boroughs – Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Lewisham, Greenwich and Newham. Each can block the implementation of almost any initiative which in any way impinges on its territory. So too can the Greater London Council, the Inner London Education Authority and various government departments, as well as the Port of London Authority and the Gas Board, all of which are holding on to much of the derelict land.

The revival of this once proud area depends as much on the introduction of homes and roads, of schools and health centres, as it does on new industry and jobs. If life and vitality are to return, a modern infrastructure is essential. Yet the Government itself seems determined to block the GLC's plans to build the new Jubilee tube line through the docklands, which GLC leader Horace Cutler believes would be the finest catalyst for flourishing redevelopment.

Much of the responsibility for the future of the docklands rests with the Docklands Joint Committee which is the body charged with overseeing the implementation of its own strategic plan for the area, under the impartial chairmanship of architect-planner Sir Hugh Wilson. At the same time, the Government is directly involved through the Docklands Inner City Partnership Group which, under the chairmanship of Peter Shore, comprises the leaders of the five riparian boroughs, Cutler and Labour opposition leader Sir Reg Goodwin of the GLC, and Sir Hugh. None of the constituent bodies, however, has in practice relinquished its rights of veto.

The job of Docklands Manager, leading the Docklands Team, was advertised at a salary of 'at least' £17,500. It attracted 260 applicants. None, however, was deemed to fit the bill and Sir Hugh set about approaching what he considered to be prima facie suitable candidates. At about £24,000 a year, the job was offered to Wyndham Thomas, for the last 10 years general manager of the Peterborough Development Corporation and a formidable expert in his field. But Mr Thomas, who is 54, declined and the job was offered in turn to his opposite number at the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, 47-year-old Fred Lloyd Roche. He too said no.

'What is needed is one executive planning and development agency, along the lines of a New Town Development Corporation, with responsibility for both planning and implementation.' says Thomas. 'More than half the land in docklands is publicly owned, and this ought all to be pooled under the development control of the Docklands Joint Committee and the new executive planning and development agency.'

Roche takes a similar view: 'There is no point in superimposing a development corporation on unwilling local authorities. But they themselves could create the sort of structure which would include the best of a new town development corporation and also retain their own democratic powers to determine strategic policy. As things stand, however, the Docklands Team has no executive teeth to carry out the job.'

The Docklands Team is suffering in consequence. It devised a marketing campaign aimed at overseas investors, but the campaign never got off the ground. It is *still* forbidden to advertise the commercial and industrial advantages of London, and the GLC's General Powers Bill, which would rescind that ban, is having a stormy ride through Parliament.

So great has been the decay of the surrounding areas that government has conferred derelict land status on the docklands. this means it will pay a 100 per cent grant to bring land up to a fit state for development. It is the first time that part of London has been given derelict land status and the decision is evidence of the Government's awareness of the scope, at least, of the problems.

Both Horace Cutler and Paul Beasley, the Labour leader of Tower Hamlets, are convinced that the existing structure for developing the docklands is adequate. Cutler admits, however, that there does have to be a central clearing house which, he says, could comprise of 'the five riparian borough leaders, Sir Reg Goodwin, and myself.' (Effectively that is, indeed, the make-up of the inner city partnership team.) 'We could act as a quasi-new town framework, but not within a rigid new town set up.' While he believes in the existing structure and arrangements, Mr Cutler has not lost hope in his concept of a *private* company – Docklands Ltd – to act as an independent agency, free of the bureaucratic pitfalls that are inherent in the present set up.

Labour leader Paul Beasley sees no merit in changing the structure, and places emphasis on the quick and effective action which can be achieved through the partnership group. 'An inner city area, where there is existing local government machinery, is entirely different from a new town area. We have adapted the existing machinery, and will continue to adapt it in a way that will work. Although the boroughs have retained their powers of veto, these have never been exercised. The way the GLC machine has swung in with the boroughs to get things done is quite remarkable'.

After the failure of their own efforts to find the right man the politicians have employed a firm of headhunters. 'We know in our heart of hearts that this is the right way' says Beasley. 'Once Dockland begins to roll nothing is going to stop it. It is going to work, and it is going to be one of the best developments going.'

Unfortunately, despite such touching affirmations of faith, it is difficult for the outsider to observe any progress. A little more than a year ago, in the GLC election campaign, Cutler declared: 'We must seize the enormous opportunity offered by Docklands. The fact that this once great centre of the world's trade is now decaying and derelict is a terrible tribute to socialist planning controls. We propose to begin work immediately to revive Docklands . . . the rebirth could be the most exciting urban development in Europe for the rest of this

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century. We will achieve this . . . by allowing the natural economic mechanisms of a great city to operate.'

Grassing over the East End

The organisational malaise which afflicts the docklands is certainly a problem. But it is a relatively small one compared with the uncertain future of the docks themselves. On May 16th the Port of London Authority announced its 'Radical Approach' to saving itself from bankruptcy. This entailed closing the Royals and West India Group of docks in the immediate future and reducing the number of PLA employees by 4,250 – nearly half.

However, the trade unions did not appreciate this brand of radicalism and the PLA was obliged to come up with a 'Possible Modified Approach', which involved closing one group of upper docks this year and keeping the other open on condition that conventional (non-containerised) cargo increased by 40-50 per cent before 1982. So unrealistic is this goal that one might interpret the 'Modified Approach' as a plan to close the upper docks in two stages rather than one.

The Joint Dockland Action Group, which represents local trade unions and community organisations, estimates that for every job lost in the docks, three or four more would be lost in related industries in the area. Unemployment would thereby be doubled – to around 20 per cent.

The bill for redundancy payments, unemployment benefit, increased social services, loss of rates and construction of roads to divert cargo to Tilbury and elsewhere would, they say, be in the region of £150-200 million. Moreover, they argue that regeneration of the docklands will be impossible if the key industry is cut by half. The Dockland Team has so far had little success in attracting new concerns to the area. Once the upper docks are gone, industrial decline will be too steep to reverse, no matter how great the organisational genius of the new Team Manager.

Not surprisingly, JDAG is calling for substantial government investment to modernise the docks and expand facilities for handling specialised cargo such as forest products, iron, steel, chemicals, animal and vegetable oils and cement. They insist this would not merely be a social bandaid on the East End community, but a viable financial proposition. The container boom is over and the volume of conventional cargo is expected to rise (though not at the rate demanded by the PLA). National Port Council figures show that specialised trade will rise dramatically over the next few years. Modernised, versatile docks should be able to capture a lucrative share of the market and – no less important – they would help attract new industry to the area.

The issue at stake is not just how far how many ships will be able to sail up the Thames before docking, but the very character of the East End. Officially, the government is committed to regenerating inner city life. Officially, the GLC is committed to reviving industry in the docklands. But JDAG fears that behind these fine-sounding aims lie plans to transform what was once a thriving working-class community into some sort of grassy pleasurama for the well-to-do of the West End. Sir Horace Cutler's shopping list for the docklands includes a Tivoli Gardens, a hypermarket and a golf course on the Isle of Dogs.

David Ross: Will Britain miss out on wave power?

This week the government produced its White Paper on alternative sources of energy which set out a programme worth £6 million, subject to review next Spring. This means there is little chance of an increase in the pace of research and development. The oil, coal and nuclear lobbies, and the caution of the Civil Service are winning. The prevailing view is that if we went ahead now with development of wave energy (for which £2.9 million has been allotted) we should be certain to waste money in a way that would be justified only under wartime conditions.

However, Sir Christopher Cockerell, now the leading experimenter in wave energy, insists that any such development is bound to 'waste' money if it is done well. 'The designers have got to have a chance to make mistakes. We know we can produce electricity.' He speaks as the owner of a 1:10 scale model power station which is floating in the Solent producing continuous electricity. Sir Christopher, who invented the Hovercraft forecast it would do just that and he was right.

For Britain certainly, and for many other countries, waves present the most promising form of alternative energy. The Government and most of the scientists and engineers engaged in seeking ways to produce energy are agreed on that much. Solar energy in this climate is never going to match the power of the sea. Aero-generators would be eyesores on our hilltops and cliffs; or we could build them at sea, as is now being suggested, but there seems little sense in doing so when the waves are a concentrated form of wind power. A tidal barrage in the Severn would be a once-off operation, damaging to the scenery and the salmon fishing, expensive to build and would make only a small addition to the energy supplies. Geothermal energy might make some contribution. But it is the waves, which surround us, and which include (off the Outer Hebrides) the roughest, richest waves in the world, which could transform our position.

This claim rests not on the optimism of one inventor but on the research of the man who will have to answer the awkward questions if the lights go out and the conveyor belts stop bringing up coal from the mines. Ian Glendenning is 'Leader of Long Term Studies Projects' at the Marchwood Laboratory of the Central Electricity Generating Board. A professional sceptic, he nonetheless suspects that we may be on the verge of a revolution as significant as the discovery of steam power. The 6,000-word survey he presented to the Oceanology International conference at Brighton was the most up-to-date and comprehensive review of the data available – and it caused quite a sensation. His conclusion was that the likely wave power sites off the coast of the UK contain 'a "potential" of 120 GW, five times the average demand on the CEGB system.'

Of course, the 'potential' energy will not all be captured. There will be losses in generation and transmission. The energy will not be 'firm' you cannot just press a button as you can with nuclear power. Yet many experts believe that wave energy can be made firm by extending pumped storage underground. There is never a time when all the seas are calm at the same instant, so by spreading the devices one can be fairly sure of a constant supply. Anyway no-one is proposing that we close all our other sources of energy.

The Government's secretary of the Wave Energy Steering Committee, Mr Clive Grove-Palmer, puts it this way: 'Divide your 120 GW by two for efficiency and by another two for transmission. Say your average energy is 50 kilowatts a metre, then from 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) of devices, we would get only 12 KW.' Even by this rightly-cautious estimate, we could replace nearly half our normal consumption of electricity without using up fossil fuels. It refutes the extraordinary pessimism of Mr Alex Eadie, junior Energy Minister, who has said that by the year 2,000 all renewable sources of energy might produce about 3% of the output of the national grid. And there are experts who will argue that we would lose not 50% but only 10% at each stage, from generation and transmission.

Two hundred years ago, we moved from the water wheel to steam power and found that we could produce more energy by boiling water than by letting it drive a mill direct. In the process, we invented pollution. Today, we have the technology to return to the direct use of water.

The story of wave energy began in 1799 when two brothers named Girard filed a patent in Paris for the first known wave-energy device: 'The motion and successive inequality of waves which, after having been elevated like mountains fall away in the following instant, take into their motion all bodies which float on them. The enormous mass of a ship of the line, which no other known force is capable of lifting, responds to the slightest wave motions. If for a moment one imagines this vessel to be suspended from the end of a lever, one has conceived the idea of the most powerful machine

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which has ever existed . . .'

The translation is by Alan Hidden, an engineer at Queen's University, Belfast, who has himself contributed an air turbine which will probably be a major contribution to wave energy.

Sine then, some 300 patents for wave energy have been filed in London alone. The modern end of the story began in the 1960s when A. N. Walton Bott, who had worked on hydro-electric schemes in Scotland, devised a plan for capturing a reservoir of water behind the coral reefs fringing Mauritius, where he had been sent by the Crown Agents. The scheme was abandoned in 1966. The price of oil was actually falling and there was no need for alternatives.

The next development came the day that Stephen Salter a physicist at Edinburgh University, got 'flu. His wife turned on him and said: 'Stop lying there looking sorry for yourself. Why don't you solve the energy crisis?' It was the depressing winter of 1973 and the Arab-Israeli war had brought the energy crisis to a head. Mrs Salter, a psychologist, gave him a precise decisive objective: something which would provide the vast amounts of energy needed, would be clean and safe, would work in winter in Scotland and would last for ever. He came up with his design for a bobbing duck. Mr Gordon Goodwin, Principal Scientific Officer at the Department of Energy was the first civil servant to appreciate that Salter had discovered something important and he worked on the back stairs and in the anonymous corridors to get him public money — a grant of £1.01 million for a two-year feasibility study, later increased to £2.5 million.

The official attitude is still cautious. Dr Freddie Clarke, Research Director for energy at Harwell is the key figure in the Government's thinking about our future energy programme. Alternative sources are 'likely to make only a minor contribution' this century, he said in a recent speech, although there could be 'a take-off in their use during the first decades (plural) of the next century'. The structures involved, he said, would be the size of aircraft hangars. One element in any of the wave energy devices could contain the hall in which he was speaking — Westminster Hall.

I have been told about buildings as high as tower blocks and as long as giant oil tankers, pounded by waves strong enough to pick up a cathedral and throw it through a torque of 30 metres diameter. Such arguments of scale are bound to daunt the layman: 'Imagine trying to build a wall 1,200 feet above sea level containing 100,000 cubic metres of concrete. Just for a start, old boy, how do you get the concrete up there?' It would have to contain 10 million cubic metres of water and to get the water up to that height would require pumps weighing about 650 tonnes inside a cavern dug out of the earth, 270 feet long and 100 feet high, big enough to take a seven storey building . . .' Yet in fact that is a description of the Cruachan pumped storage development in Scotland, which has been functioning for 13 years with a 400 MW capacity.

The Japanese are pressing ahead with wave energy in the pragmatic manner that was once regarded as the British style. A former naval officer, Commander Masuda, has invented a device called the Oscillating Water Column — an upturned canister with an air bubble in the top and a hole above it. As the waves rise and fall inside the canister, the air is sucked in and pushed out and it drives an air turbine. They tried it out on a small scale to light up navigation buoys and lighthouses and there are now 300 of them functioning. Trinity House has just bought three of them and a British firm, AGA Navigation Aids, is to produce them here under licence: They need no fuel and are serviced only when the lights need replacing. Now the Japanese have moved on to bigger things. They are about to launch a 500-ton ship, the Kaimei, which is 80 metres long. They have cut 22 holes in the bottom to make air chambers, and turbines and dynamos will sit on the deck producing electricity — between 1,000 and 2,000 kilowatts compared with our best effort so far of one kilowatt in the Solent.

> 'Buildings high as tower blocks; waves strong enough to pick up a cathedral'

British scientists and engineers would probably be critical of the Japanese device, which appears to lack efficiency. Our own experts are continually testing models on computers and improving designs and holding committee meetings. They apparently fail to grasp that wave energy can make a major contribution even if the first devices are, in engineering terms, inefficient. There is no need to standardise design. Waves used inefficiently cannot be wasted like coal or oil.

Why is Britain going slow? Tony Benn is not usually regarded as a Minister dedicated to caution. His hero is Franklin Delano Roosevelt who embarked on a comparable scheme to help pull America out of slump: the Tennessee Valley Authority, which built dams to produce cheap hydro-electric power. It regenerated parts of the South and provided tens of thousands of jobs. Today, wave energy could do the same in just the areas where work is most needed — the Clyde, Belfast and the North-east where shipyards are dying for lack of orders and skills are available to build the huge seaborne monsters. One word whispered in explanation is Concorde. There is a fear that we could become involved in an expensive project which, once it had captured the public imagination, would be unstoppable. There are rival interests of course. Dr Freddie Clarke has great admiration for the work of the oil companies and they have no enthusiasm for anything which might make their presence less desirable. Mr Alex Eadie, Mr Benn's number two, is a former chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party's miners' group. The National Coal Board, with the support of the N.U.M., is busily digging up the Vale of York around Selby and is contemplating the Vale of Belvoir. It has plans for the Cotswolds and there are rumours that the city of Oxford is sitting on a pillar of coal. The nuclear lobby is powerful in the Department and at Harwell, everyone will assure you that the dangers of nuclear energy are minimal. (The Wave Energy Steering Committee is based there and you reach its offices through corridors lined with compartments labelled DANGER RADIATION.)

None of these factors should be exaggerated. We are talking about honourable people, genuinely worried about committing enormous sums to an experimental project. But meanwhile the Japanese are going ahead and are already selling their patents and devices abroad, where there is a limitless export market. They are even selling *us* their navigation buoys. They need energy desperately and they want foreign markets, too. We could also use the export prospects, with patents and products, but while we have coal and oil complacency will continue to reign.

There are four main wave energy devices being developed in Britain at the present time.

- **Sir Christopher Cockerell has invented a trio of articulated rafts which follow the contour of the waves. As the front raft bobs up and down freely, and the second moves at a different phase, while the third stays relatively stable, the hinges drive hydraulic jacks: pistons inside cylinders which pump out hydraulic fluid and drive a motor. The motor turns a generator and electricity flows.**
- **Stephen Salter, a physicist at Edinburgh University, has a line of bobbing vanes, shaped like cones and held alongside one another by a spine. They are known as Salter's ducks because they nod up and down. The motion of the ducks drives rotary pumps which, in their turn, power a generator.**
- **The National Engineering laboratory at East Kilbride, near Glasgow, is developing the Oscillating Water Column – an upturned canister with an air bubble up above the water line and a hole in the top. As the waves rise and fall, air is sucked in through the hole and pushed out again. The motion drives an air turbine which is linked to a generator.**
- **The Hydraulics Research Station at Wallingford, Oxfordshire, has invented a power station which stands on the seabed, unlike the other devices which float, It looks like a high-rise block of flats, with lines of non-return valves facing the waves, like parallel rows of letter boxes. The water is forced into the monster and trapped in a high-level reservoir. The only exit is through a turbine into a low-level reservoir, rather like the system of a canal lock. As the water flows down, it drives a turbine and, once more, produces electricity.**
- **There are also plans being developed by Vickers Offshore, Lancaster University, Imperial College and many other centres.**

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Christopher Hitchens: Scorpions in a bottle: Lebanon's factions circle towards the next war

The American Embassy in Beirut is guarded today by soldiers from Saudi Arabia, and as a metaphor this seems reasonable enough when you think about it. Further to the south of Lebanon, there is a contingent of soldiery sent by the Shah of Iran, which is handing out generous fraternal aid to those Muslims who happen to be of the same Shi'a faith as the mighty Shah himself (though there is the odd rumour that before long the Shah may need every available soldier at home). Syrian tanks have their gun muzzles pointed into the Christian rightist quarter of town, a mile or so from the levelled site of Tal al Zaatar refugee camp, where the same Syrian army stood by two years ago and saw the Palestinian inhabitants burned alive in an episode which their people will remember as the Jews recall Masada.

With all these memories of holocaust, with the commercial centre of town scorched to a ruin as a reminder, and with over a dozen foreign armies represented, intercommunal violence is at a low ebb – for the moment. Gang warfare and rival militias are rife, and Hobbes would recognise the absence of law and order, but at least Muslim and Palestinian Arabs are no longer stopped by Christian soldiers and told to say 'tomato' – a shibboleth word whose pronunciation betrays the origin of the speaker, and can lead to a summary execution. Yet the two communities, which fought and bled themselves to a standstill so recently, are still circling tensely around one another like scorpions in a bottle. There will be another round.

Commonly in this century, countries have been devastated, overrun, bankrupted or taken over by despotism. But it is less usual for a country to cease to exist. Even Cambodia, which has experienced almost every Calvary in the book, is still a nation and a state. Lebanon, now, is neither. It is a battleground for the game of nations, where the forces which dispute the oil and land and treasure of the Middle East are trying each other out.

'Get there if you can and see the land you once were proud to own'. Thousands of refugees from the Israeli blitzkrieg on the southern border are still gathered in the indescribable *bidonvilles* of the misery belt around Beirut, but others are trickling back to the beautiful and fertile area below the Litani river, where Israeli soldiers and a pot-pourri of UN detachments are trying to work out a means of keeping the relentless Palestinians at a distance.

This is one place where Israel cannot claim to have made the desert bloom. The marvellous greens and blues of the sea, the sky, the groves and rivers around Tyre and Sidon are still evident of course, but there are awful black smudges where the bombs and shells fell on Al Rashidia refugee camp and on the villages nearby. In the offices of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a leftist force which is very well dug-in around the contested district, guerrilla commanders show off the casings of the infamous cluster bombs. They say they were being dropped last year, too, only nobody would believe it then. Among the trees, the lemons are rotting on the ground for lack of people to harvest them.

One immediately begins to notice the French. Although they wear the insignia of the United Nations, they contrive to make an absolutely distinctive impression. Perhaps because they have been here before – it was after all the French colonial system which saddled Lebanon with its ghastly sectarian constitution of 1943, and led to the polarisation of the country by confession. Perhaps because one has become accustomed to seeing the French as analogues of the Cubans – propping up Emperor Bokassa here, bombing the Polisario there, storming ostentatiously around Chad and Kinshasha. Anyway in Lebanon they stick out a mile; both the grizzled nasties who learned to ply the knout in Indochina and Algeria, and the fresher young hopefuls yearning to appear on the cover of *Paris Match*. There is, already, blood between them and the Palestinians, with a *para* officer and several guerrillas badly shot up. And bad feeling between them and the Senegalese soldiers,

> 'The French stick out a mile; the grizzled nasties and the young hopefuls'

who have been used as cannon-fodder by France before and suspect that it is happening again.

I spoke to a Palestinian fighter who is one of the small but noticeable number of his countrymen originating from African slave descent. He had been arrested by French officers who thought that he must be a Senegalese deserter, and said it was the most unpleasant experience of his life. Over on the other side of town, Captain Meneguaux of the French parachute division was a little more discreet. He shrugged and smiled at rumours of African incompetence – one understood that it would not be politic for him to *say* anything. *C'est folklorique*.

The Swedes, who man forward positions near the Israeli lines, are more wide-eyed. I spent a while on a hilltop with one Lieutenant Asp who was anxiously engaged in discouraging a group of George Habash's guerrillas from advancing any closer to 'the Zionist state'. Had he talked to them? Yes indeed, and did I realise what good English they spoke, and how politically aware they were? One of them had been about to complete his lawyers' exams! Lieutenant Asp clearly felt that he had been dealing with putative voters for the Swedish Social Democratic Party.

Once in a while, a really stupid remark, of international proportions, is made by some overpaid 'statesman'. For sheer hubris (one would say Philistinism if it did not mean Palestinian) Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski's 'Bye Bye PLO' taunt is very high in that league. Within a few weeks of its utterance (after the Sadat initiative), the Palestinians and their peasant allies in South Lebanon had held Israel almost to a draw in a bare-knuckle fight. They refer to it with pride as 'the Seven Day War', to remind you that their irregulars engaged the Israelis for longer than the combined conventional might of the Arab League has ever done. They quote the tributes of General Mordechai Gur and others, acknowledging their fighting capacity. These are people who, in the last few years, have been mauled by the Lebanese Army (which they succeeded in splitting), the Syrian army (with which they have an uncomfortable truce), the Lebanese extreme right militia (a gory stand-off), the Jordanian army (which slaughtered them), and the Israelis (old story). 'Bye Bye' is premature. That obituary has been written too often before.

Even so, and despite their *élan*, the Palestinians in Lebanon are in trouble. There was a time when they made common cause with an elemental social revolution in that country, and could have hoped to establish a storm centre for the whole Arab world. But that was drowned in blood in 1976. Arafat's idea of the Lebanon as a model for his 'democratic secular state' in Palestine seems hollow and ironic today – if it was ever anything else. So the defeat has been as much political as military – and with the repeated demonstrations of Israeli strength and determination there has come a wilting of local support for the Palestinian guerrillas, a reluctance by the have-nothings to face any further reprisals. More than this, since the murder last year of its leader Kamal Jumblatt, the Lebanese Left has been weakened and shorn of direction. In many ways, it has become as much mired in tribal and religious warfare as the Right. Elsewhere in the Arab world – notably in Kuwait – energetic and advanced Palestinian minorities and their friends have been trodden upon and silenced for their dangerous and socialistic attitudes. Different axes of influence rise and fall and re-form. Now it seems to be Saudi Arabia and Egypt versus Libya and Iraq, but tomorrow it might be Syria and Jordan versus Iraq and Egypt, or some equally improbable

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constellation of friends and foes. The Horn of Africa has no monopoly on dramatic and incongruous changes of allegiance.

Part of the Israeli intention in driving so deeply and harshly into Lebanon was to try and make Syria more anxious to discipline the Palestinians herself, thereby forestalling the kind of border incident which calls down Israeli ire. Another part of Jerusalem's plan was, more obviously, to extend Syria's defence perimeter vis a vis the Golan Heights. It is a little early to pronounce, but neither of these objectives seem to have been achieved in the way Begin hoped. His own misjudgment of the international (specifically the American) response has been vast and typical. And the Syrians have internal problems of their own. And the PLO did not take the military beating which was anticipated. But, as ever, it is the Palestinians who get minced in between. So intense is Israeli hatred for their cause that she would rather encourage a 'Greater Syria' on her own borders than allow that there is anything in the Palestinian case which demands vindication. Out of such ironies is the next Middle East war being prepared.

Not that Lebanon has ever been short of ironies. Some random samples. During the Beirut massacres it was the PLO which protected the small Jewish community (not that many of them can be Zionists if they've stayed this long). During the same period, it was the Christian Phalange, which took its name and style from the Nazis in 1936, that received Israeli political and military aid. The socialist leader Kamal Jumblatt was both a feudal and religious lord and a millionaire, and his son has succeeded to both positions as well as the chieftainship of the Socialist Party. Meanwhile the Maronite Christians have been temporarily (albeit resentfully) saved by Muslim Syrian arms. And the whole mosaic is temporarily held in place, to Israel's temporary advantage, by a force from the same United Nations which ritually condemns Israel as a racist settler state. That is why Beirut is such a favourable vantage point for the study of the Middle East, and why such a carapace of cynicism has grown over most of those who make their homes there. Sad, though, as if there was not enough to be sad about, is the Armenian community which used to be the largest in the region and is now thinned out by yet another crossfire of religious intolerance. If only they figured more in the Old Testament they might have claimed a local homeland as well. As it is, they can choose between staying put, or going to Soviet Armenia, or opening an import-export business in Melbourne. Like the Kurds, the Jews or the Southern Sudanese, they have to wonder about the possibility of any pluralism in an Arab world dominated by Islam, armies and oil.

The long-running Bourbon farce of Lebanese politics carries on, meanwhile, as though nothing had happened and the country was still a bourgeois Eldorado of family politics and lucrative international credit. Half the membership of the 'emergency cabinet' of 1975 (and what a farce *that* was) had been members of the first civilian government in 1943. The same names and the same clans recur again and again. Chamoun, Gemayel, Franjieh, Eddé are the familiar bosses of the debauched old ascendancy. A few weeks ago the entire government, made up chiefly of such titled hacks, resigned and told President Sarkis that their cabinet could not agree. There was then a not-very-decorative interregnum of jostling and squabbling around the palace, followed in mid-May by the announcement that no new administration had emerged and that therefore the old government and the old portfolios would be reappointed exactly as before. The newspapers hardly had the strength to make a joke out of it. But the old gang just isn't a ruling-elite any more. After over a quarter of a century of being despised both for its dictatorial *and* its ineffectual character, often both at the same time, it can now safely postpone the job of reforming itself. Its writ will never run again. The destiny of Lebanon is in other hands.

A useful example of this lack of any common or national interest came the other day. The Muslim feudal barons of the South, anxious at the number of refugees created by the Israeli strike, asked their Christian counterparts in the feudal system further north if they would accept a few thousand refugees in their own districts. The idea was to prevent the refugees from falling under leftish or Palestinian influence during their period as displaced persons. Back came the reply – no way. The Christian oligarchy felt that the rot had already set in among the southern villagers, and did not want such a dangerous infection in its own fiefdoms. The Christians in general are disillusioned enough as it is. Having, like the Israelis, preferred Syrian occupation to any deal with the Palestinian diaspora, they have found that Syrian troops are harder to get rid of than to invite. Three weeks ago, the Rightist militia challenged the Syrians in an area of Beirut which they felt they controlled. The reply was Syrian shelling of the densely populated Christian quarter of Ain el Rummaneh – the same area from which Christian commandos had in 1975 launched the attack on a Palestinian bus which sparked the civil war. The Maronites had perhaps become so used to selling the country by inches that it only began to strike them as unwise when it was their turn to pay. This explains the hysteria of some of their militia groups, like the amazing Guardians of the Cedars who fight under the slogan of killing one Palestinian each – every day.

> 'So many ideologies have been found wanting that people turn to old "verities".'

On the Muslim side of Beirut (confusingly enough, the Western side is Muslim and the Eastern side is Christian), political emblems are tangled and inchoate too. There is the swastika symbol of the Syrian social nationalist party, which has always been able to command some Lebanese support for the idea of 'incorporation' into a 'greater Syria'. There are the Palestinians, currently divided over how many concessions to make to the Cairo-Ryadh axis, with the Rejection Front now openly calling for Arafat to step down in favour of a more hard-line leadership. Among the poorer and less well-educated Muslims, pictures of Nasser express the simple longing to be part of the Arab world instead of an under-class in a Christian-dominated enclave (a longing which may be fulfilled in surprising ways). Between these different forces and fiefdoms, Lebanon has been effectively partitioned and Balkanised beyond repair. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels are usually quoted as saying that in great class battles the outcome is generally the victory in whole or in part of one side or the other. They are less often quoted as saying what they also say – that there is the option of 'the common ruin of the contending classes'. It is difficult not to feel that Beirut is the battlefield where everybody lost.

Almost unnoticed last month, there took place in Beirut a *festschrift* for Mikhail Naimy, the country's leading poet and philosopher and a grand old man who was the colleague of Khalil Gibran until the latter's death. Interviewed for the occasion, Naimy said such hopeless things as 'the Lebanese should beautify their souls as their country is beautiful'. He added, slightly more pungently, that many Lebanese people seem to regard themselves as protectors of God, and acting as his advocates, when the jealous deity doesn't need such zeal from them. Of course, religious conflict rots the morals like no other. But recently in the Middle East, and outside it as far as Pakistan and Iran, there has been a revival of movements like the Muslim Brotherhood and other *simpliste* phenomena. They make one worry that Naimy might not be right when he says that the East has lost its function of supplying prophets to the world. In an article recently published in the West, the Egyptian socialist Mahmoud Hussein speculates that this atavistic come-back may be because so many ideologies have been tried and found wanting in the East in such a short time that the people are returning to old 'verities' out of despair. It seems to be happening in Israel too. The hope of a democratic peace evaporates as this process gains ground.

In the immediate future, there is no alleviating factor, except for the hilarity among villagers in South Lebanon at the impending arrival of peace-keeping battalions from Ireland and Fiji. As in the case of the Balkans of yesteryear, the great powers have discovered that you can only fight by proxy up to a point, and after that you find that the neutral ground has all been burnt up. Lebanon was the great test of international diplomacy, and everybody failed it. In particular, the Arab world failed to save one of its member nations from ruin. A tragic casualty of the war was Edouard Saab, intellectual and editor of the Beirut paper *L'Orient/Le Jour*. He once wrote that the Palestinians 'are the public conscience of the Arab world'. It could be added that the fate of inconvenient consciences, public and private, is repression.

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Land Grabbing on the West Bank

An ominous little episode here – in itself perhaps relatively trivial – has underlined matters that are far from trivial: the Begin government's continuing commitment to the establishing of Jewish settlements in the disputed territory of the West Bank; the influence of the ultra-nationalist settlement movement, Gush Emunim; and the impossibility of making any progress towards a Middle East peace agreement while the Begin government persists in these policies. IAN BLACK reports

The affair can be said to have begun when reports appeared in the Arabic press in Jerusalem that the Israeli custodian of absentee property in the West Bank was refusing to accept the validity of power of attorney documents issued by Arab landowners living abroad. An estimated 120,000 acres of land, especially in the Christian areas round Bethlehem and Ramallah, belong to Arabs who have emigrated to Europe or to the United States. The intention of the Israeli authorities seemed to be to add this land to the category of 'abandoned' land belonging to Arabs who have gone to live in hostile Arab states.

In spite of denials by the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Israel Lands Authority – which are the bodies responsible for land administration in the West Bank, Palestinian lawyers and journalists in the area continued to claim that since February it had been impossible to transact deals in land belonging to West Bank Arabs who had emigrated. Officials attempted to explain this decision to give a wider interpretation to the category of 'abandoned property' by saying that there had been a number of recent cases of local people taking advantage of the owner's absence to acquire land for themselves with the help of forged powers of attorney. But there is good reason to believe that the bureaucracy's decision in effect to halt land dealing did have a more sinister purpose.

Two weeks ago the deputy Minister of Defence, Mordechai Zippori, who makes no secret of his annexationist sympathies, toured several West Bank sites 'to examine the ownership of lands around the Jewish settlements in the area'. He was accompanied both by senior army officers and by members of Gush Emunim.

The liberal daily *Halaretz* reported that the real purpose of the visit was to 'look into the possibility of seizing thousands of acres for new Gush Emunim settlements'. This brought a vigorous denial from the Defence Minister, Ezer Weizman, ('I will not expropriate vineyards and olive groves'), and it was insisted that there was no new policy on absentee owners. All Israeli official sources emphasised that 'irresponsible' people had mischievously linked the absentee question with a 'fictitious' plan to seize land for Gush Emunim. The burghers of Bethlehem and Ramallah were duly reassured by these denials, and lands transactions have been resumed.

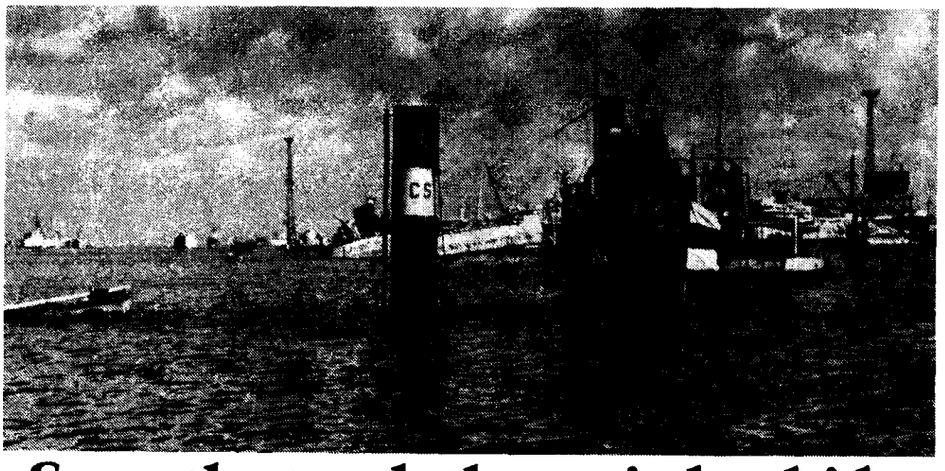
Yet there are no signs of an early halt to Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Indeed, a recent plan submitted by Weizman is even more grandiose. And, significantly, the government chose to publish it immediately after the recent vote in the United States Senate on President Carter's package deal which will give US military aircraft to Egypt and Saudi Arabia as well as to Israel. The intention can only have been to make sure that no one missed the point that, in spite of the unprecedented defeat for the Israel lobby in Washington, the West Bank is still in Israeli hands.

The plan could not be called modest. It envisages building six 'urban centres' and increasing the area's Jewish population from 4,500 now to 10,000 within three to four years and eventually to no less than 160,000. Five of the planned cities are to grow out of Gush Emunim settlements.

Implementation of the plan would require Israel to take possession of large tracts of land now owned by Arabs. Much of the land surrounding existing Jewish settlements is rocky and could never be cultivated. But there are also pockets of privately owned, more valuable land and these the Israeli army would like to expropriate – ostensibly for 'defence' but in reality for settlement.

The recent High Court appeal over the lands of Nebi Saleb, near Ramallah was the first of its kind. Six village claimed that their land was expropriated by the army for the Gush Emunim settlement of Neve Tzuf. The settlers had erected a barbed wire fence round the site 'to protect saplings,' and the bulldozers were preparing a 12 acre site when the High Court issued a temporary injunction. This ordered the Defence Ministry to stop work and told the settlers to take down their fence. The court also ruled that the settlers must show cause why the expropriation order issued by the military governor should not be cancelled.

The decision was naturally welcomed by those in Israel who are tired of the arrogant subterfuges of Gush Emunim and of the backing it receives from senior officials, notably the Minister of Agriculture. At Sharon, and Zippori. Gush Emunim, on the other hand, shows no signs of despair. Its immediate reaction to the Nebi Saleh ruling was to issue a statement saying it was sure that the land in question would prove not to belong to the villagers, and that in the end it would be possible 'to establish a blossoming settlement there'. Yet the movement's leaders are clearly worried. In an interview this week, its political secretary by implication urged expropriation of land by stating that settlement was needed for security and land was needed for settlement. He also urged that Arabs should be induced to emigrate from the West Bank – and replaced by Jews. This marks a change from the movement's earlier, admittedly disingenuous contention that Jewish settlements would be the best proof that Arabs



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and Jews 'could live in amity'.

The Gush Emunim movement was founded in 1974 as a response to the Kissinger shuttle diplomacy and the fear of an imposed peace. It has thrived. Its supporters now occupy twenty settlements in Judea and Samaria, most of them in the heart of areas populated by Arabs. They are sited not only according to biblical precedent, but also so as to preclude the possibility of Israeli concessions on the West Bank.

Some of the settlements are rudimentary in the extreme. But anyone who has seen the Maale Adumim industrial centre on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho or the paved streets and apartment blocks of the Kiryat Arba suburb that has been tacked on to Arab Hebron, can have no doubt of the movement's success.

Gush Emunim came out in vociferous opposition to Begin's peace plan, and it is alarming to think what it could do if there were to be serious American pressure on Israel. The movement has given the government two months.

Jewish settlement in the West Bank is not the only obstacle to a peace settlement. But its continuation by a government that has done much to encourage and little to dissociate itself from Gush Emunim and its pseudo-messianic antics, can only have a deleterious effect. The land question has always been fraught with emotional significance since the first clashes between native Palestinians and Zionist settlers at the end of the last century. Last week, the villagers of Nebi Saleh were reported to be celebrating their court victory by singing PLO songs, one of which went: 'Kalashnikov in hand, I will liberate the homeland.'

The peace camp in Israel is troubled by the assumption that settlement is an indisputable moral right, regardless of any extraneous factors, be they dissent in Washington or resentment in Arab villages. An Israel controlling one million Arabs in the occupied territories with a settlement that is also a military post on every hilltop, rooted in the biblical past and regenerated by the challenge of pioneering, will not only endanger its own character and soon erode those values which still differentiate it from Rhodesia: it will also being the next war even closer.

A Special Correspondent

Kings Return to Kandy

Nobody, not even his most caustic critic, has gone so far as to predict that President Junius Richard Jayewardene will end by crowning himself emperor of Sri Lanka in the manner of H.I.M. Jean-Bedel Bokassa or even by appointing himself President for life à la Big Daddy. The portents, nevertheless, are not reassuring. First it was a small cloud no bigger than a man's fist. Then suddenly there appeared dark clouds all over the sky like the foregathering of the birds in the Hitchcock classic.

Item: Not long after his massive victory at the polls JR declared a general amnesty for prisoners to mark the occasion of his 72nd birthday. Coming as it did during the post-election euphoria, however, this passed with only an occasional eyebrow raised here and there. But other ominous signs followed thick and fast.

Item: There was news (it was announced in the government-controlled press) that a coin with JR's head on it was being minted. (So far the coin has not been put into circulation).

Item: The government-owned Ceramics Corporation brought out an elegantly finished, expensive wall plaque of JR's profile for sale to the public. Sales have been poor.

Item: The government announced its decision to move Sri Lanka's political capital from Colombo to Sri Jayewardene-Pura, a former capital of the Sinhala kings. Critics see this, perhaps unfairly, as an instance of JR's personal vainglory. A case can be made for the move irrespective of the felicitous coincidence of names.

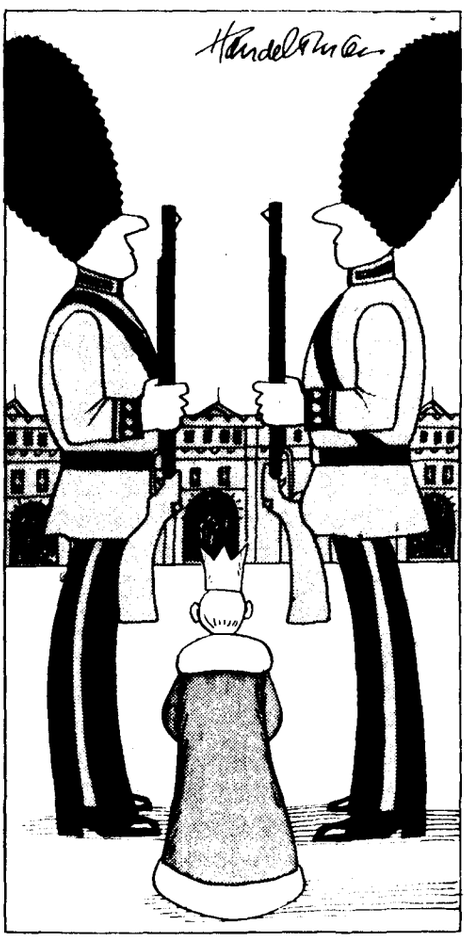
Item: The Constitution was changed making the incumbent Prime Minister (JR) President and executive head of the government. Though this step had been announced in the United National Party's election manifesto, it was seen by his critics as another sign of what they are apt to call JR's growing paranoia. The final clause in the amendment to the Constitution laid down that *wherever* in any statute the words 'Prime Minister' occurred the word 'President' should be read. JR was having his presidential cake while continuing to eat his prime ministerial one.

Item: JR turned up at a religious ceremony at Adam's Park borne aloft in a palanquin carried on the shoulders of admirers. Perhaps this was the closest he came to resembling Idi Amin.

Item: JR while electioneering got a lot of propaganda mileage out of the fact that a large number of Mrs Bandaranaike's relatives were feeding at the public trough. He claimed he had only one relative, his son (who was, in any case, not even resident in Sri Lanka) and so JR would not be likely to offend in this particular respect. Actually JR (like all Sri Lankans) has many relatives a score (or more) of whom have been fixed up in high public office since last July. This is seen not so much as a reneging on a campaign promise as another indication of JR's growing indifference to public opinion.

Item: A man of temperate, even austere, personal habits JR has grown increasingly intolerant of others' shortcomings and weaknesses. Recently he fired the head of an important government organisation reportedly because it came to his ears that the official concerned had attended a cocktail party (an abhorrence to JR) at which the official had, in the course of the evening, happened to stumble and fall. Recalling President Ford's own proclivities in this field one wonders that President Jayewardene was not more forgiving towards the luckless official.

Item: But perhaps the most revealing of all, and certainly the most damaging to JR's personal image (though he has not yet seen it that way), is his recent introduction of a local version of the Buckingham Palace guards at his Presidential Palace, with changing of the guard every two hours and presenting arms whenever H.E. is sighted. Resplendent in red and black and gold, the guards are even expected to emulate their Buckingham Palace prototypes to the extent of keeping perfectly still even if teased by tourist women! JR is apparently unaware of Richard Nixon's ill-advised move to dress the White House footmen in Ruritanian



uniforms and how public ridicule compelled him to abandon the scheme. A lynx-eyed newspaper cameraman (from the Sun, the only English language daily not controlled by the government) spotted that JR's praetorian guards wore brassware which had the letters E.R. decoratively intertwined (obviously left-overs from pre-republic days, brass is expensive). A close-up clearly showing the lettering was published in the Sun, causing much amusement. The government controlled press carried the President's comment: 'The letters should really have been JR, for Junius Rex'. This was reported as a witticism. Somehow it did not quite come across. On the rare occasions JR permits himself to make a joke one is left with a feeling similar to what her 'narrow fellow in the grass' gave Emily Dickinson: 'tighter breathing, and zero at the bone'.

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London Diary

☐ 'I disapprove of what you say, and I will fight to the death to stop you saying it.' This is our present version of Voltaire's noble view, as held by persons as diverse as Mrs Whitehouse and the supporters of the Race Relations Act. Today no one seems prepared to stand up for the free expression of opinions with which they profoundly disagree, and no wonder the second centenary of the sage of Ferney's death has passed uncelebrated. He died, he wrote, 'loving God, helping my friends, not hating my enemies and detesting superstition.' We live hating our enemies and adoring superstition, especially when it has to do with blasphemy, witchcraft or outer space.

The lack of understanding of what Voltaire was on about is so widespread nowadays that if, for instance, you oppose censorship you are taken to warmly approve of pornography. It also happens that I find modern pornography deeply depressing, the models extremely unattractive, the photography poor and the prose style appalling. At the showing of blue movies at Scotland Yard I take the precaution of removing my glasses, which reduces the whole messy business to an impressionist blurr; and I can't think what I dislike more, the motorway pin-ups in *Rustler* or the awful pseudo-psychological jargon with some of the world's most boring fantasies in *Forum*. None of it is at all nice; but I am sure that censorship is more dangerous, a view to which I believe the bourgeois son of the lawyer Maitre Arouet would have subscribed. Anyway we should perhaps take this opportunity of lifting a pale glass of wine to Voltaire. After two hundred years we need him more than ever.

☐ About these dreadful film shows in the Obscene Publications room at Scotland Yard, I remember an elegant prosecutor, also a keen gardener, arriving for an afternoon session with a can of film under his pin-striped arm. During a pause for reel changing he asked the Sergeant in charge of the projector if he might show his movie: the Officer, not liking to disappoint a senior Counsel, agreed. So between *Toilet Orgies* and *Double Pain Date in the Tower of Terror* we saw refreshing shots of herbaceous borders with lupins and delphiniums blowing in the wind.

☐ More salubrious (just) film shows at Cannes when I went last week to work on board a German yacht (well, it's a long story). The beach outside the Carlton Hotel was the usual bazaar of cheerful producers flogging non existent films to puzzled Swiss distributors, and script writers offering their services to demonstrate the impossibility of the whole business. (The great advantage of being a writer is that they need a script before they can really be sure they can't make the film). The manicured sand was also covered in topless ladies demonstrating the truth of the bra manufacturers' earthshaking discovery that women have become the shape of broomsticks this year. One unforgettable sight. A French film critic in a city suit, shoes and socks, was sitting on the foamy edge of the water reading, with dramatic gestures, a lengthy typescript into a microphone held by a radio engineer wearing huge headphones. He sat imperturbable as Canute challenging the advancing waves to engulf him, his engineer and his thoughts on Fassbinder for all eternity.

☐ I can still dimly remember when American was a terse, vivid and energetic language reviving, as used by Hemingway and Damon Runyon, much of the colour and punch of Elizabethan English. Americans in movies uttered terse one liners: today they take ten minutes to say 'Good morning' and it's become almost impossible to listen to an American speaking without falling asleep before the end of the paragraph. The language has simply collapsed under a weight of meaningless verbiage: but becoming the centre of the communications industry, communication in America has become almost impossible. The debasement of speech is most wonderfully parodied by Cyrus McFadden in 'The Serial', a work in which everyone is like mutating over the years through Gurdyieff . . . actualism, Hyman Lifestyling . . . and heavily into the body's need for zinc. Men must also be very careful, despite such brave outposts as the New Statesman's 'This English' column and Private Eye's exposure of 'Ongoing Situations'. Social worker's reports are full of chatter of 'supportive relationships' and 'failure to relate to a family situation'. I remember an American lawyer asking me what was my exact motivation in wishing to appear in a supportive role to non relators to accepted mores in a forensic situation. I was able to answer him in one English word. 'Money'.

☐ I was confirming, of course, the popular idea of lawyers as grasping skin flints, dreaming of nothing but fees; a view which the Law Society, with an amazing insensitivity to public relations, tries to perpetrate by claiming a monopoly in conveyancing. If it's true they can perform this simple task more efficiently and cheaply than Mr Whatshisname, then they are certainly entitled to the business. Meanwhile their constant invocation of the Solicitors Act 1974 simply looks like an appeal to those restrictive practices which middle class professionals are the first to denounce in tool setters or boilermen.

☐ Nothing can be wholly bad, even football. On Saturday morning a girl who comes to type told me that football on the telly was driving her up the wall. In anguish she tried BBC-2 to be greeted by a film in Swedish with letters along the bottom. Finally she had to resort to a desperate remedy to fill the aching vacuum of her evenings. She went to bed with a book. So the World Cup may yet trigger off an astonishing revival in the art of the novel.

☐ Mr Callaghan is no doubt right, we shouldn't come to the problems of Africa as if they all started yesterday. But how is the ignorant white liberal to approach that intoxicating continent in which every political situation seems destined to end in inexorable tragedy? Moral distinctions between black and white no longer seem relevant, and it's easy enough to regard white South Africans as some backward indigenous tribe trapped in the terrible pattern of racial warfare. Everyone must be appalled by the Zaire massacres, but who can defend Mobutu? It's noticeable that British newspapers were slow to report the number of black casualties in Zaire, which seem to greatly outnumber the white deaths; and photographs of the French Legionnaires are said to show at least one expert who learned the art of torture by doling out electric shock treatment in Algeria. Is the truth that no one can ever be right, and that endless brutality is the only lesson history has taught in Africa?

The most helpful writing on the subject this week has been by Derek Ingram in the 'Sunday Times'. He stresses the bias of the Western Press, and the beauty and peace of Africa even at its most terrible moments. I suppose one thing you can say about history in that continent is that it has been violently accelerated. I remember driving with the Head of a University Press in Nigeria during some period of slaughter. The car was a little draughty. 'Frightfully sorry,' my Ibo host explained, 'but yesterday some bloody fool chucked an assegai through the back window of the Jag'.

☐ Most depressing moment of the week: listening to the news that a section of the Conservative party is planning a referendum on the subject of capital punishment. I am old enough to remember the shameful and furtive manner in which I hid the newspapers from the children on the morning Ruth Ellis was hanged, and the feeling of disgust at being part of a society which permitted the ritual of legal murder. I really had hoped that by now the argument was over; and the nastiest thought of all is that there is a political party prepared to use hanging as a vote catching issue. If this particular form of barbarism returns I promise to desert the halls of justice and concentrate entirely on growing cabbages (those I have raised from seed this year look quite promising). I hope Voltaire is listening: this is where he came in.

John Mortimer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard

☐ A scheme under the job creation programme to hire 12 young people at £43 a week to count lamp-posts in Yorkshire has come under fire. – *Southend Echo* (F. Glynn)

☐ Policemen are being seriously injured, and often permanently disabled during riot-training, the chairman of the Constables' Central Committee, Mr Jack Kent, said yesterday. – *Guardian* (Chas White)

☐ Former Sex Pistols guitarist Sid Vicious was sent for trial at Knightsbridge Crown Court, accused of having a quantity of drugs so small as to be invisible. – *Guardian* (R. Simmonds)

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Here We Go Again

This, as far as this column is concerned, is share-and-share-alike week. No point in sitting on a verbal treat and selfishly keeping it to oneself, for we're into Names again. Following my mention a few weeks ago of some oddities of nomenclature, a joyous worldwide correspondence has developed with, of all people, inadequate me as its centre point. Long years of reading our matchless 'Letters to the Editor' section has given me total confidence in the bona fides of our correspondents and anyway, an invented and bogus name instantly announces itself as such. No need to be outlandish to be suspect either. The names that 'Sapper' dreamt up, and a dream world indeed it was, for the topping girls, referred to as 'fillies', in his yarns (Molly Travers, Violet Seymour, Sybil Daventry, Phyllis Drage, Brenda Carstairs, Sylvia Clavering), have got fiction written all over them.

Not so with those kindly supplied by a Worcester friend (a distinguished headmaster, incidentally. Could any calling be more reliable or above suspicion?) who assures me that there is a famous and respected firm of Kidderminster house-agents called Doolittle and Dalley (Telephone Kidderminster 4721, if you're thinking of snapping up that bungalow), names that should surely more rightly belong, for such is one's sad experience of life, to a firm of solicitors. And he follows this up with the pleasing fact that some years ago the Head Girl of the Stroud Technical School was called Dawn Kick, adding that though this has a somewhat alarming antenatal ring to it, Dawn's sturdy and robust presence provided a healthy reassurance that all had been well in the womb.

Let us now flash over the seas to far-off Fiji and a kind journalist correspondent who was once shepherded across the USA by a commanding and academic lady named Magda P. Sheen. He wondered idly what her 'P' might stand for until the subsequent arrival of her Christmas card explained all. 'P' stood for 'Phalla' ,it seems, writ large and flowerily defiant and presumably the feminine version of something else. And then, added my pen pal, in the Korean war and on the South side there was an officer later known just as General B.S. Lee but who in his early days used to appear in his full 'B.S.' glory, which turned out to be 'Bum-suk'.

This brings me to a little matter of a rather sensitive nature. As faithful readers will know, we do try in this column to keep up a certain *tone* and it is therefore with some misgiving that I venture on various names which have reached me from all quarters and the suppliers of which have, I am afraid, thrown *tone* to the four winds. In my austere bachelorhood, denied knowledge of the fuller things of life, I don't always understand what they are getting at, and to the pure all things are pure, but if you are in the very faintest doubt about the solidity of your own purity, skip the rest of the paragraph. Well then, living out their lives in America as best they can, are to be found the Misses Comfort and Satisfy Bottom, Ginger Screws Casanova, Casual Cox, Veniamin Dymshits, Caresse Mount, Judith Moist and Ophelia Griesekoch. In remote Norway there is an attractive Oslo female police constable named Randi Bones (I am informed that Randi was once a popular Norwegian christian name and my friend there also claims an acquaintance called Randi Bugge). The Oslo telephone book itself is rich in the unusual – there is Herr Odd Bugge (page 131) while on page 153 is to be seen Ivar Cock. Elsewhere there are three sports clubs called BUL, FROGG and FRIGG. Small wonder that poor old Ibsen spent so much of his time in Italy.

Back we go to seemliness and propriety and London, NW1 where a gifted friend in leafy Camden Town reports the Reedmore Book Co. on the Finchley Road, a demolition firm called the Wackett Brothers, and a very tiny little van that scoots about the area and has the owner's name on its side, A. Elf & Sons. And how agreeable to hear of a handy kitchen implement advertised in 'House & Garden' for people who had purchased a whole salami and sold to the public as the Baby Slicing Machine. And up now to Glasgow and its Citizens' Theatre (for some years the chief carpenter was called Whittle), where a student production contained an actor, presumably studying medicine, named Lance Boyle. There was also at a teacher's training college, and I seem to see her as an outstandingly well-developed brunette, a lady called Eileen Forward.

But it is to America that we turn, as so often, for the very apogee of bizarrerie. Westward, look, the land is bright, not to say quite dazzling in its weird christian and surnames (and all that follow are fully vouched for and authenticated). Especially strange is the way that American names so often seem to dictate their owners' choice of profession or occupation. There is, it is true, a firm of North London dry-cleaners called A. Kleener but this happy coincidence fades into insignificance when compared with a psychiatrist called Dr Dement, an obstetrician (Dr Carl J. Paternite), a polo player (John Wellborn Wallop), an opera singer (Leif Roar), and a dentist (Dr Gargle). There is also somewhere a lady called Hedda Hair, doubtless hell bent on becoming a modish *coiffeuse*, and another one named Elode Maneure (green fingers, would you think?).

For any foreign person with both a lively appreciation of the uncommon and a sense of humour to go with it, employment in the USA must be ticklish work. Picture yourself as either an Ambassador or his good lady about to throw a reception at your Washington embassy. Your secretariat has sent out suitable invitations, the canapés are lined up in hideous and soggy array on the silver dishes, and there you are, done up to the nines and with your *visage d'occasion* firmly fixed, all set to welcome the guests. A flunkey flings open the double doors and in pours a cross-section of all that is brightest and best in American life, their minds fixed on just one thing – how, after the introductions, to secure the strongest possible Martini to give a boost inside to the five they swallowed while dressing.

As each guest advances, the major domo sings loudly out the name (no shy mumblings, as is our English way) and sweeping towards you you see a delightful lady, all smiles ('Aida Quattlebaum'). She is followed by a very jolly couple, ready to be friendly with a cheery 'Hi!' ('Bubby and Money Raspberry'), and after them comes a pleasing woman on her own ('Lesbia Lobo'). No time to draw breath or take a healing sip of champagne for the pace is quickening. 'Fanny Hunnybun'. 'How do you do'. 'Bacon Chow'. 'Good evening.' 'Professor J. C. Beaglehole.' 'How do you do'. 'Vula Malooley'. 'Good evening'. 'Lacey Pantti'. 'What lovely weather you've brought with you.' 'Fairy Clutter'. 'How do you do'.

The food and drink are going speedily down, the conversation has become deafening, and you mingle. Although their names have already been boomed out, no good American would dream of letting you be unaware of their name (or of not knowing yours), and as you come up to them, they announce themselves all over again. 'E. Pluribus Eubanks'. 'Hi! '. 'Miss Fishy Step'. 'Hi!'. 'Agonia Humerdinger'. 'Hi!'. And with the last name, 'Lobelia Rugtwit Hildebiddle' ('Hi! '), that must be finally that.

Roger Woddis

Rope's End

Mr Edward Taylor, Shadow Scottish secretary, is campaigning for a return of capital punishment.

He spurns the thumbscrew and the rack
  Employed in olden days
But now he wants the gallows back,
  The party's split two ways.

There was a time when murderers
  Were hanged till they were dead,
And Teddy heartily concurs,
  But Willie shakes his head.

The problem is a knotty one:
  A law that takes a life
Will never jam the gangster's gun
  Or blunt the cuckold's knife.

A referendum on the noose
  Should guarantee fair play;
And furthermore, will prove its use
  Upon election day.

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Letters to the Editor

NATO and Cyprus

Sir, The naïveté so apparent in your editorial (NS 26 May) 'Carter, NATO and Cyprus', does injustice to the NEW STATESMAN and the usually high standards of journalism maintained by your journal. For us Turkish Cypriots, the question of whether there is an arms embargo on Turkey or not is secondary; our prime concern, which your editorial ignores, is that of security. Since the termination of British rule in Cyprus, we have been attacked, killed, looted and made refugees three times over. No body, no government, certainly not the NEW STATESMAN, uttered a word of reproach to the aggressors, namely the Greek Cypriots.

Recently, the new Archbishop of Cyprus has been urging his people to fly the Greek flag on Kyrenia castle – note that he is asking for the Greek, as opposed to the Cypriot flag. Last week, the Commander of the Greek National Guard was asking for a state of readiness from his men to 'fight for Hellenism' in Cyprus. Is it not obvious to those who are capable of looking at the Cypriot problem objectively, that *enosis*, which is the root cause of all past problems is still there, alive and kicking?

Whatever the rights and wrongs of 'high' politics in New York, UN or NATO, the relevative question should be centred around security for the Turkish Cypriots as well as moderate Greek Cypriots. Until now, the Turkish Army has been the only guarantor of the Turkish Cypriot security. Until a better alternative is found, Turkish Cypriots will want, indeed need, the Turkish Army.

TAYLAN BAHCELI

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Conrad and Morris

Sir, Peter Conrad's review of Jan Morris's books on Oxford (NS 26 May) is snide, nasty and smart-alecky. It includes at least 17 quite unnecessary references to Miss Morris's sex change and probably says more about Mr Conrad's private worries than it does about Miss Morris's books.

A. TURNER-BISHOP

13B Meadow Court
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Preston

Sir, I don't know Jan Morris and I have only glanced at her book, but intimacy is not required to identify Peter Conrad's review (NS 26 May) as in the very worst traditions of English intellectual smartarseism, building a fraudulent structure of comment on a vagrant thought that was worth a few lines, for all its rather tasteless and insensitive essence.

To start a hare is a momentary pleasure; to kick it to death with Wellington boots suggests just those precious aspects of English higher education, the kill is the thing, that people fortunately are now turning away from. I'd rather have Jan Morris's Oxford than Peter Conrad's Senior Common Room cleverness.

S. MURRAY-SMITH

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Googly

Sir, Your reviewer John Sturrock in Gentlemen v Players (NS 26 May) has not merely exactly reversed the nature of the googly, which in fact deviates from the off to the on, but has also in the process missed a subtle feature in class terms of the impact of the googly. Whereas the leg break, turning towards the off, encouraged off side strokes the googly inhibited such strokes because batsmen could no longer be sure that a particular delivery was in fact, a leg break. Bosanquet, the amateur inventor of the googly, was an early cause of careworn thoughtful professionalism, puzzling over minute alterations of wrist action; he could also be seen in terms of a class analysis of cricket as the equivalent of the Marxist Etonian H.M. Hyndman, introducing a worm into a previously sweet apple. Further political analysis could follow from the knowledge that the left handed bowler's equivalent delivery to the right hander's googly is known as a Chinaman. If we add the fact that political deviation is very much a Socialist concept, and that Communist countries are exponents of the prolonged political googly (in which the appearance of orthodoxy suddenly turns out to be a heresy – the gang of four) much more could clearly be written about the class elements of cricket.

ALAN RUMFORD

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Child Pornography

Sir, Having antagonised his Party and Prime Minister – let alone Parliament and the majority of the British people – one might have expected Mr Mikardo to avoid any further public discussion of my Protection of Children Bill. Instead in his article (NS 26 May) he has further damaged his reputation by totally distorting the truth, presumably in an attempt to try and justify his previous mistakes.

He claims that 'the drafting of the (original) Bill was seriously defective and 'it could have made a criminal offence out of a mother taking a snapshot of her unclothed child'. If he cares to read Hansard he will see that Lord Harris of Greenwich, Minister of State at the Home Office, told the Lords that the Government accepted the principles of the Protection of Children Bill and did not wish to alter its effect in any significant way. Certainly a number of Home Office amendments were successfully moved but these were supported by Lady Faithful, who has taken on responsibility for the Bill in the Lords.

Mr Mikardo apparently still doubts that child pornography is widespread in Britain. Only a few days ago a national network of men exploiting children for pornography was uncovered in a major police investigation at Southgate. According to press reports 15 men were arrested and other arrests are expected. Six hundred documents and photographs were seized. Mr Mikardo's colleague, Mrs Joyce Butler MP, was quoted as saying 'child pornography is more widespread than a lot of people realise'. There can be no doubt that the present law is inadequate. The most relevant Act, the Indecency with Children Act, is concerned only with children under 14. It does not protect young people between the ages of 14 and 16 – two very vulnerable years when they are of special interest to the photographer. Worse, the extent of the operation of this Act is by no means clear, for it contains the unhappy and unhelpful phrase 'with or towards a child'.

Mr Mikardo took it upon himself to be the only Member of Parliament out of 635 to object to the Bill. He knows perfectly well that, like so many other Private Member Bills including his own, my Bill would have failed due to lack of Parliamentary time had the Prime Minister not come to its rescue. I agree with Mr Mikardo's view that our procedure for dealing with Private Members' Bills need reform and only wish his Government had been more adventurous in the whole area of Parliamentary reform. However, it is singularly unhelpful for any Parliamentarian to object to a Bill at the same time as he claims to be one of its supporters – surely this is an abuse of our present, admittedly archaic, procedures?

Your readers should know that on the morning of the Bill's Committee Stage Mr Mikardo rang me to demand that Conservatives should cease their opposition to two Labour Private Member Bills, otherwise he would object to my own. It was crude political blackmail of the worst kind and it showed an incredible lack of political judgment.

Mr Mikardo has been around long enough to know and behave.

CYRIL D. TOWNSEND

House of Commons

Hitler: Gitta Sereny replies

Sir, I was grateful for the interesting comments you published on my 'Hitlerwave' article (NS 26 May). May I, however, take issue with a few points?

The film 'Hitler, A Career' (which, incidentally, will be screened at the Oxford International Film Festival this month) with – as I put it 'Joachim Fest's text and Josef Gobbels' films . . . (a) deliberate attempt to portray Hitler as Germans saw him from 1918 to 1945 . . . ' could obviously do nothing to 'clarify those interlocking social, political and above all economic circumstances responsible for Hitler's rise to power' – as your correspondent Martin Kane had hoped. Worse than that, the commentator actually informs us at one moment (a remark much deplored by one of my young discussion groups), that the contributions industry made to the party funds were 'given without strings'. (I quite agree, incidentally, with Mr Patrick Salmon (2 June) that young Germans are far more knowledgable and perspicacious about the Nazi past than given credit for – in Germany!)

I do not think, however, that Siegfried Lenz, or other 'detractors of the Fest Film' missed the point in their evaluations if they deplore, above all, the 'moral amputation' – the lack of a *judgment* in the film. They are criticising the aspect of the film which has had the most obvious and, most obviously, the most damaging effect, particularly on young viewers who – just as I was in 1936 at Nuremburg – are very susceptible to visual-emotional persuasion. Fest's film, as I believe I demonstrated, is a mistake. But, to be fair, I don't think that any film – or even journalism, however serious – can do justice to 'illuminating the structural connections between capitalism and fascism'. That, in the final analysis, must remain the task of books.

Mr Wolfgang Kessler objects to Dr Mitscherlich's condemnation of the present wave of books and films which claim 'historical perspective'. Perhaps he missed the quotes around the term: the point that what she objects to is the *claim* of such writers as David Irving – or Henry Picker – to 'objectivity', and that she *calls* their approach, with admirable restraint, 'pseudo-objectivity'.

The five worst revisionist books of the last two years – it is worth remembering – originated in Britain and America. I do not think that the self-censorship I call for – a rejection by book and newspaper publishers or film producers (our own more than the Germans!) – of purely sensational material on the Nazis, would be a sign of 'helplessness' or 'question-begging': the world is not made up of academics. 'National knowledge and discerning in-

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terpretation' – *if* self-censorship is exercised, *can* and should be conveyed by other means than esoteric literature suitable only for the intellectual elite.

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Kafr Kassim Massacre

Sir, Mr David Jacobs's letter (Letters 19 May) is so tendentious that I am surprised you bothered to print it. The Israeli officer with overall responsibility for the Kafr Kassim massacre, Brigadier Yshishkar Shadmi, *was* fined one piastre after being found guilty of a 'merely technical' error. The two officers, who actually carried out the massacre, were indeed sentenced to seventeen years' imprisonment. But Mr Jacobs knows quite well that the sentences were reduced by the Supreme Military Court. Later, after representations from the Chief of Staff and the President, they were reduced still further so that both men were freed within a year of their crimes. As Mr Jacobs has spent most of his life working for Israel, he must know this. Why is he then deliberately misleading your readers?

DAVID GILMOUR

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Mr Big

Sir, I read with interest Julian Symons' review (NS 12 May) of *The Train Robbers.* He has, however, misread my book on one essential point – and he is not the only one! Never, anywhere, did I suggest that the 'uncrowned king of the underworld' or any other 'Mr Big' was behind the train robbery, or anything directly to do with it. This old crook's contribution was to think the whole idea out years before: what Reynolds and Goody did was to put teeth into a plan which had been wandering around the underworld for a long time, everybody assuming that it was just another pipe-dream. Reynolds heard of it in prison: this is well-known in the underworld; and, with hindsight, one can see the difference between the brain-power in the plan and the *débacle* of the aftermath. Another of the 'mind's' plans, by the way, was to rob the Post Office cage. A now reformed (I hope!) acquaintance of mine actually spent £200, which was money in those days, on a second-hand hoist, in hopes of carrying this out; but in vain. I am told the old man is dead. He was certainly a character, having abandoned a reasonable professional life for one of almost chessboard crime. His last bright idea was to 'do' Onassis's yacht – by proxy, as usual. Alas, his schemes were rather too intellectually demanding for an underworld which delighted in them but never got round to doing much – perhaps just as well.

PETA FORDHAM

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Henry James

Sir, I am writing to defend Henry James – not All Souls. In his review of Jan Morris' two recent books on Oxford (NS 26 May) Peter Conrad writes: 'Henry James found [in Oxford] a demonstration of that theory of the cerebral leisure class on which his novels depend: hence his admiration for the otiose institution of All Souls'. Presumably he bases this on the extract in *The Oxford Book of Oxford* (p. 285). Even reading the passage from *English Hours* in isolation enables one to see that Mr Conrad has failed to catch the tone; but when one recalls that the essay was originally published in the New York publication *The Galaxy* (September 1877) it becomes obvious that James is playing a gentle game with his readers: he teases them with the notion that he would like to attach himself to an abuse, to bury his 'nostrils in the rose before it is plucked'. The key sentence that points to his arch critical sense is: 'This delightful spot exists for the satisfaction of a small society of Fellows, who, having . . . no care save for learning as learning and truth as truth, are presumably the happiest and most charming people in the world.' James by 1877 was sufficiently mature to know that such a course of life was not a recipe for happiness, and that word 'presumably' carries a good deal of weight. The whole passage is loaded with gentle irony. The reviewer is, I am afraid, guilty of a kind of short-hand that won't quite do.

BERNARD RICHARDS

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Anti-Soviet Activities

Sir, Roger Boyes's article (NS 26 May) on the Russian Association of Free Trade Unions seems to me totally misconceived. In a free market economy such as ours, the purpose of a Trade union is primarily that of selling labour collectively in the labour market and of ensuring, that once a price and conditions of work have been negotiated, the terms are maintained until the next round of negotiations comes round. In addition to this, our trade unions engage in certain welfare activities for their members and also try to further their interests politically in Parliament by supporting particular political parties. Under such conditions, a strike is merely a tactical device to enforce a particular set of commercial demands. In the Soviet Union labour is not a marketable commodity and there is no freedom to sell labour on the open market, so that trade unions are bound to fulfil different functions than they do in our society.

In theory at least, workers in Russia create wealth for themselves (all means of production, distribution and exchange being owned by the community) with the surplus of their labour or the profit being used for the benefit of all. Whether this is merely a theoretical model or whether it takes place in actual fact, is a matter for debate. What is a fact however, is the inability for trade unions in Russia, to negotiate a market price for the labour of their members by a process of free collective bargaining. Instead Soviet trade unions are designed to act as watchdogs to guard work people against abuses by management of labour regulations and to ensure that labour conditions and wage levels are observed. They can and do bring abuses to the notice of management and the authorities such as labour tribunals where they can demand redress. They also organise welfare activities for their members as unions do in this country. Although trade unions are consulted by the central authorities when the fixing of wage levels is being considered the actual wage paid is in no way a negotiated figure.

What then is it, that those who wish to form a 'Free Trade Union' in Russia want? If they aim at forming an organisation for marketing the labour of their members on a free labour market, they will be hacking away against one of the main-pillars on which the centralised organisation of the Soviet Union rests and are likely to lay themselves open to anti-Soviet charges. If on the other hand they are merely a group of individuals complaining about an apathetic and corrupt trade union leadership then why bring this to our attention, we can do nothing in the matter, and why not try to rectify the matter internally? We just do not know and our newspapers and television programmes tell us nothing, and much more independent and detailed information is needed before we in the Labour Party can come to a considered view on the matter. To compare this particular issue with what goes on in South Africa, Chile or Agentina is quite irrelevant in this context.

RALPH INNES

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Arab disunity?

Sir, Nomen est omen. If Dr Timothy Niblock (Letters 26 May) had not just nibbled at the *Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* but really studied Herzl's policies, he would have found that he was never intent on displacing the resident population. Your correspondent quotes selectively. I quote from the diary entry of 12 June 1895: 'It goes without saying that we shall respect and tolerate persons of other faiths and protect their property, their honour and their freedom with every means at our disposal. This is another area in which we shall set the world a wonderful example.' Dr Niblock does not mention this – either because he wishes to ignore it or because, as I suspect, he found his quotation second hand. It is indeed old hat. It was used by Erskine Childers in the *Spectator* of 14 July 1961. Joseph Fraenkel, a Middle East historian, commented: 'The truth is that Herzl never proposed the deportation of the native population. Article 3 of a Charter to the Ottoman Sultanate, drafted by Brodenheimer on behalf of Herzl makes no mention of deportation. This is a misrepresentation of Articles 3 and 4 which deal with the right of an exchange of property within the Ottoman Empire by voluntary agreement.' Fraenkel went on to accuse Childers of misrepresentation, misinterpretation and mistranslation. A copy of Fraenkel's accusation was presented to Childers who, however, preferred to keep silent.

The spirit of tolerance and cooperation with the Arab population, and never its displacement, was and remains a basic principle of Zionism, This is embodied in the Israeli Declaration of Independence of 14 May 1948: 'Israel will maintain complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens without distinction of creed, race or sex. It will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture.'

Finally, if Dr Niblock really wants to know who really displaced half a million Arabs, let me quite from the PLO's official journal, a source above dispute by Arab propagandists, the *Falastin el Thawa* of as recent as March 1976: 'The Arab armies entered Palestine to protect the Palestinians from the Zionist tyranny but, instead, they abandoned them, *forced them to emigrate* (my italics) and leave their homeland and threw them into prison similar to the ghettos in which Jews used to live.' Hic.

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Tax Morality

Sir, In his curious article on tax avoidance, David Nissan (NS 26 May) talks of 'a decline in moral attitudes towards paying tax'. What is this 'tax morality'? Reading Mr Nissan, one can only assume he refers to the tendency so to arrange one's affairs that one pays as *much* of one's income as possible to the Treasury – in contrast to 'tax avoidance', whereby one so tends to arrange things that, by law, the Treasury take as *little* as possible. I have no doubt at all that Mr Nissan himself has an exemplary 'moral attitude to paying tax', and that he has arranged – as is his good right – that his entire gross annual income is to be donated to the Inland Revenue.

MICHAEL BLOCH

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SUMMER BOOKS

Clive James

From Log Cabin to Log Cabin

The Memoirs of Richard Nixon *Sidgwick & Jackson* £12.50

Largely deservedly, Richard Nixon is in such low repute that it is hard to give him credit for anything without sounding capricious. Yet it must be said, in the teeth of all expectation, that his *Memoirs* constitute a readable book of no small literary merit and considerable human dignity. Doubtless there are ghost writers in the picture somewhere; in the acknowledgments a large number of secretaries and editors receive thanks; but if a committee wrote this book, it was one of those rare committees which, setting out to design a horse, actually succeed in designing a horse instead of a camel.

Nixon has done many reprehensible things in his career and in a way this book is just one more of them. By internal contradictions alone, quite apart from evidence that can be brought up from outside, it is a book patently full of half-truths and false conclusions. But it is not a mean book. Nixon's faults are all on view, but so is the fact that they are faults in something substantial. His claims to a place in history are shown to be not all that absurd. He will be harder to mock from now on, although perhaps even easier to distrust.

Such a judgment should emerge naturally from any fair reading of the text. A fair reading, however, might well be prejudiced by an initial glance at the copious photographs. Featuring a hero described in the captions as RN, these tend to show Nixon at his most bogusly histrionic. During the Hiss case he profiles like a concave Dick Tracy while examining the 'pumpkin papers' through a magnifying glass. His dog Checkers helps him read the newspaper on a bench in Central Park. There is a supposedly eloquent photograph of construction-union leaders' safety-helmets arranged on a White House table as an endorsement for Nixon's Cambodian adventure, with nothing in the caption to tell you that the union leaders would probably have reacted the same way if he had atom-bombed the Eskimos. Finally there are pictures commemorating his long hamming contest with Brezhnev. The most startling of these shows Brezhnev apparently sticking his tongue in Nixon's right ear. If you get no further than the photographs, your estimate of the book is bound to be wide of the mark.

The text proper is more than 1,000 pages long. Most people who tackle it at all will probably start near the end, to find out what the author (for practical reasons I shall assume this to be Nixon himself) says about Watergate. But there are good reasons for beginning at the beginning and reading the whole way through. For one thing, it's a good story. Nixon's anabasis was the classic journey from log cabin to White House, and the early stages of the trip are made no less absorbing by the consideration that he was later obliged to retrace a portion of the itinerary from White House to log cabin.

Nixon's poor-but-honest Quaker background in Depression-era California is celebrated with all-American pride. The scene-setting is like watered-down Steinbeck, but there is a certain gusto in the way the clichés are deployed, and the prose is grammatical. (As, indeed, it is throughout the book: apart from a solitary use of 'credence' for 'credibility' there are no solecisms.) Nixon's father is portrayed as a strong-willed populist, his mother as an exemplar of 'inner peace'. There are deaths in the family. There is no money. But deprivation is material not spiritual. At Whittier High School Nixon plays Aeneas in a production marking the 2000th anniversary of Virgil's death. Working his way through Whittier College, in his Junior year he reads Tolstoy. Winning a place at Duke University Law School in North Carolina, he strengthens his mind with the unyielding facts of case law.

The emphasis is always on self-help. The boy Nixon professed liberalism with a populist tinge, but in effect he was already a conservative. He was always for a free economy as opposed to a managed one. He was thus a Republican from the outset. His political beliefs are the most honest things about him and it is doubtful if they ever varied. Since they were hard won, in circumstances which favoured the opposite case – if any family stood to gain from the Democratic Party, the New Deal and the welfare mentality, it was the Nixons – he should be given credit for his independence of mind.

Even when young, Nixon can never have been a charming figure, but he has every right to be proud of his upbringing. Later in life, especially after his defeat by Kennedy, it became an article of liberal belief that Nixon was embittered by resentment of the Eastern establishment and its fancy Ivy League ways. In particular he was supposed to be eaten up by envy of the Kennedys. If any of this was ever true, he has done a thorough job of covering it up in his memoirs. But there is good cause to suppose that Nixon's undoubted vindictiveness was more against liberalism as a philosophy than against the Eastern establishment as an institution. Nixon felt that liberals were fashion-conscious, changeable and unscrupulous. He felt that they would get him if he did not get them. In the end his obsession with this point led to his downfall. But we will fail to understand the strength of Nixon's mind, and the breadth of his political appeal, if we suppose that his fixations were energised by nothing except spite.

It is better to be a poor boy who makes good than a rich man's son. This general truth becomes particularly true when you compare Nixon and Kennedy according to criteria more telling than mere points of style. Nixon knew American society and politics from the ground up. Kennedy had the shallowness of the man who starts at the top. Nixon has his gaucheries, but they have always been part of the whole man. The Kennedy clan thought that Nixon lacked class. It was never strictly true, but even if it had been, there are worse things to lack. In the long view corn looks better than chic. Kennedy pretended to admire Casals. Nixon honestly thought that Richard Rodgers's score for *Victory at Sea* was great music. Nixon was the one who could actually play the piano. Nixon's homely enthusiasms were in fact part of his strength.

Unfortunately for himself, America and the world, Nixon could never see his strength for what it was. He was forever augmenting it with unnecessary cunning. If he had been less clever he might have lasted longer. But he always felt that he needed an edge – he had to get the bulge on the other guy. He claims to have joined the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities with 'considerable reluctance'. You would think from his account of the Hiss case that he had conducted the prosecution in a temperate manner. He is careful to dissociate himself from McCarthy, whose own juggernaut was soon to get rolling. But on any objective view, Nixon behaved like a demagogue throughout the hearings. Whether Hiss was guilty or not is a separate issue. Nixon tries to make Hiss's guilt a matter of historic importance, but in fact the historic importance has all to do with the way Nixon used the Fifth Amendment to undermine the spirit of the First Amendment. Nixon pioneered the McCarthyite technique of establishing silence as an admission of guilt. It was Nixon who gave McCarthy the courage to be born.

The House Committee was a Star Chamber. Nixon still professes to assume that Hiss invited suspicion by being mistrustful of the Committee. But only a fool would have expected to be tried fairly by such methods. The point recurs awkwardly 1,000 pages later, when the author can be heard protesting that his own trial by House Committee is a travesty of justice. If Nixon objects to the methods by which his Presidency was destroyed, then he should repudiate the methods by which he destroyed Hiss. They were the same methods. He claims that Sam Ervin and the other Watergate committee members were publicity seekers. But what, on his own admission,

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did the Hiss case bring him? It brought him 'publicity on a scale that most congressmen only dream of achieving'.

And so he was off and running – running for President. He pretends, characteristically, that such thoughts were not yet in his mind. Quoting Harry Truman's observation that the Vice-Presidency is about as useful as a fifth teat on a cow, he makes out that it was his very innocence of high ambitions which enabled him to take on the job of playing second fiddle to Eisenhower. After all, it was a thankless task. The media applied their double standards, forgiving Adlai Stevenson everything and Nixon nothing. Because Ike was too big to touch, the liberals ganged up on Nixon. Or so Nixon tells it. Certainly the attack over his supposed misuse of campaign funds must have hurt: his first response was the horribly maladroit 'Checkers' speech, and the long-term result was an unquenchable hatred of the press. But he usually forgets to say how indiscriminate he himself was

The four-year-old boy

accustomed to being when dishing out abuse. The furthest he will go is to say that he had no choice. 'Some of the rhetoric I used during the campaign was very rough. Perhaps I was unconsciously overreacting to the attacks made against me.' Someone else was always unscrupulous first. Nixon, says Nixon, would have played clean if they had let him.

During Ike's 1956 campaign Nixon tries to fight high-mindedly, but he can feel that people are disappointed. They *want* him to be tough against the ruthless Stevenson. This is Nixon's message throughout: the liberal-dominated media might be against him, but the pulse from the grass-roots is the country's true heart-beat. Nixon could already hear the low roar of the silent majority long before he gave it a name. Its good wishes sustained him in adversity, which arrived in 1960, when he lost the Presidential race to Kennedy. In an act of heroic self-sacrifice, Nixon talked Ike *out* of appearing on his behalf, lest Ike's heart should give way. Nevertheless he came within a whisker of not losing. He might have won on a recount, but patriotism stopped him asking for one.

As everywhere else in the book, Nixon has only good to say of JFK. But he is scornful of the Kennedy machine. 'From this point on I had the wisdom and the wariness of someone who has been burned by the Kennedys and their money and by the licence they were given by the media.' He certainly learned the wariness. One doubts if he learned the wisdom: anger probably exacerbated his natural vindictiveness. It must have been galling for Nixon to see Joe Kennedy's family being indulged by the press while he himself was hounded, right up to the end, for transgressions which often did not even exist. But sympathy should not mislead, although Nixon would like it to: the whole tendency of the book is to suggest that extraordinary persecution justified extraordinary retaliation.

Honourable defeat in the 1960 Presidential race was followed by ignominious disaster in the 1961 California gubernatorial contest and a duly embittered retirement to the wilderness, where the Internal Revenue Service, egged on by the White House, harassed him about his tax returns. (What he did unto others was done unto him first.) Will he run again? On Key Biscayne, Billy Graham and Bebe Rebozo help him decide. Bebe Rebozo is half of a comedy duo, Bebe Rebozo and Bob Abplanalp; it is nowadays fashionable to deride them as shady characters, although it seems likely that they are just a pair of routinely dreary millionaires. Billy Graham is harder to explain away. Here again we see the real difference between Kennedy and Nixon. Kennedy paid lip-service to the Pope. Nixon really believed in Billy Graham. Kennedy was a high-flying cynic. Nixon was low-rent sincere.

Back from nowhere, Nixon runs and wins. He has the grace to concede that his victory over Humphrey was no more convincing than his loss to Kennedy. But that's war, and here, thrown open, is the White House with all its wonders, including a refrigerator well-stocked with butter-brickle ice-cream, left by the Johnson girls so that Tricia and Julie shall not starve. Bliss!

Vietnam spoiled it all in the short term, and Watergate ruined it in the long, but before turning to those issues we ought to concede that Nixon had a lot going for him as President. Without dressing the set too much, he is able to show us in these pages that he could handle the work. Just the way he offers us proof of his political intelligence is proof of his political intelligence. The picture he paints is of a man on top of the job. With Haldeman keeping the side-issues at bay, Nixon deals with the essentials. Whether in the Oval Office, at Camp David, at San Clemente or on Key Biscayne he is at the hub of America. Whether in America, Europe, China or the Soviet Union he is at the spindle of the world.

He obviously revelled in the task and doesn't fail to convey the excitement. He gives you a better idea than anybody else has of why someone should want to take the job on. He even transmits a sense of mission. You can see how he might have thought of himself, without megalomania, as ideal casting for the role. Pat was just right too. She wasn't as flash as Jackie, but she was solid: less up-to-the-minute, but more in tune with the past. She might not have known Andy Warhol personally, but she arranged an exhibition in the White House for Andrew Wyeth. The Nixons were proud to be square. At their best, they showed why squareness is better than sham.

It could have been an idyll. But America was at war, both in South-East Asia and in Nixon's soul. Attaining the Presidency made him feel more victimised than ever. The Democrats had bequeathed him the mess in Vietnam. Now they would attack him however he handled it. They would stop at nothing. 'Therefore I decided that we must begin immediately keeping track of everything the leading Democrats did. Information would be our first line of defence.' He says this on p.357. The thought is supposed to be going through his head in 1968, when he was already looking forward to the 1972 elections. A harmless enough looking statement, until you realise that he is attempting

The Vice-President

to justify, in advance, the private espionage activities carried out by the slapstick team later to become famous as the Plumbers.

Nixon makes the best possible case for himself. He was certainly in a fix about Vietnam. If he had been the cynic he is often supposed to be, he could have blamed American involvement on Kennedy and Johnson and brought the troops home. We can see now that it would have been the right thing to do, since the North Vietnamese won anyway. Even at the time it was clear to every responsible authority except the Pentagon that Vietnam was a bottomless pit. By staying to fight it out, Nixon was contravening his own idea of a sensible foreign policy. The Nixon Doctrine advocated aiding only independently viable governments and confining the assistance to hardware – roughly the same policy Carter is pursuing now.

Nixon might have got out of Vietnam straight away if he had thought it was the difficult thing to do. But the liberal opposition to the war convinced him that quitting was the easy thing to do, and he made a fetish of doing the difficult thing instead of the easy one. If the whole world begged Nixon to do the easy thing he would do the difficult one, every time. But it would be a mistake to underestimate the strength of Nixon's convictions. He thought he was saving the world from communism. He was probably right to believe that for communists peace is never an end, only a means.

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He was certainly right to be untrusting. But he never understood that there was such a thing as handing the moral advantage to the other side. He thought that the other side was too immoral for that to be possible.

Kissinger thought the same way. As Nixon's National Security Adviser Kissinger was the man in charge of strategic brainwaves. It would be easy now for Nixon to blame Kissinger. More damagingly for them both, he approves of everything Kissinger did. There are successes to record: détente was probably the right move, which Nixon carried through patiently, without weakness. The Middle East policy was realistic in an area of competing unrealities. But Nixon still seems to think that the toppling of Allende was some kind of triumph, by which the Red Sandwich was undermined. The Red Sandwich was the device by which communism, squeezing inwards from Cuba and Chile, would capture the whole of South America. The Red Sandwich had to be foiled. Innocent Chileans have gone through the torments of the damned because Nixon and Kissinger thought that a sandwich had to be stopped from closing in on a continent.

It would have been better for everyone, capitalists included, if Nixon had burdened Allende with help. The best that can be said for such catastrophic initiatives is that they did not originate with Nixon. Eisenhower turned down Castro's requests for aid. The same sort of mistake goes all the way back to the repudiation of the Dixie Mission. Nixon's proudest boast is that he reopened the doors to China. He forgets to say that he started out as a fervent advocate of the policy which closed them.

So in foreign affairs Nixon didn't show quite the clear vision that he thinks he did. He still seems to think that the invasion of Cambodia was a 'complete success'. Right up to the final débâcle, he and Kissinger understood everything about the war in Vietnam except what mattered. 'As Kissinger saw the situation, we were up against a paradoxical situation in which North Vietnam, which had in effect lost the war, was acting as if it had won; while South Vietnam, which had effectively won the war, was acting as if it had lost.' If that was indeed how Kissinger saw things, then he was seeing them backwards. (Apart from a few such local outbreaks, incidentally, the word 'situation' is kept under tight control.)

Meanwhile, as Nixon tells it, the liberals and radicals were wrecking the country. On p.471 he argues that the depredations of the Weathermen were sufficient reason for stepping up the activities of the intelligence agencies. Reference is made to the FBI's long history of black-bag jobs in defence of liberty. The reasoning is specious, since Nixon is really out to justify the existence of the Plumbers, who were not a government agency but a private army. On p.496 he is to be found 'keeping the pressure on the people around me . . . to get information about what the other side was doing', the other side being the Democrats. He admits that he overstepped the mark, but blurs the importance of the mark he overstepped. He was in fact subverting the Constitution of the United States, which is framed not so much for democracy as against the tyrant, and declares that a Presidential party shall not be formed. 'At least, unlike previous administrations,' he says on p.781, 'we hadn't used the FBI.' But at least the FBI is to some extent accountable for its actions. Nixon's personal fact-gathering unit was accountable to nobody – not even, apparently, to Nixon.

Nixon persuasively argues that he knew nothing about the black-bag jobs in detail. There is no good reason to suppose that he did – what use is power if you can't leave the dirty work to subordinates? But plausibility evaporates when he tries to suggest that his ignorance was genuine rather than wilful. The first unmistakable evasion comes on p.514, when he addresses himself to the matter of the raid on Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office. 'I do not believe I was told about the break-in at the time.' Why isn't he certain? How could he forget?

Credibility slips further on p.638, which records the day – 18 June 1972 – when Nixon, at ease on Key Biscayne, first hears about the Watergate caper. Haldeman tells Nixon that the FBI will have to go further than Miami if it wishes to trace the cash found on the burglars. Nixon tells us nothing of how he reacted to what Haldeman said. An eloquent silence, because what Haldeman was really saying was that the cash was laundered. Why would Nixon accept that information without question, unless he knew that the White House was bankrolling

The resigning President

intelligence operations with funds meant to be untraceable even by government agencies?

For the rest of the book, Nixon gives a convincing impersonation of a man standing on a landslide. As his world collapses, his prose attains the authentic poise of deep grief. But the remorse is all about the cover-up, not the crime. Just as Nixon always did the difficult thing instead of the easy thing, so he always accepted the responsibility but refused the blame. He takes the responsibility for the cover-up: his subordinates started it, but in order to protect them he allowed it to go on. He doesn't take the blame. Still less, then, does he take the blame for the crime itself. To the end of the line, the most he will admit to is an error of judgment. His aides sinned through an excess of zeal. His own sin was to let them do it.

'If I had indeed been the knowing Watergate conspirator that I was charged as being,' he says on p.902, 'I would have recognised in 1973 that the tapes contained conversations that would be fatally damaging.' It ought to be a strong point. Unfortunately Nixon has by this time already made it clear that the main reason he considered himself guiltless was that circumstances had made extraordinary measures legitimate. He had done what he thought necessary with such self-righteousness that the possibility of ever being called to account hadn't entered his head.

Nixon's book is one long act of self-justification. To a remarkable degree the attempt succeeds. At the end his enemies are plausibly made to sound hysterical victims of what he calls 'liberal chic'. The House Judiciary Committee produced 7,000 pages of evidence against Nixon, but most people now would have trouble being precise about what he did wrong. The media caught Watergate fever. Rumours that he had lined his pockets assumed the status of common knowledge. He almost certainly didn't. He would never have risked losing the Presidency for the sake of personal enrichment. He lost it because he went on feeling hunted even after he was home and dry.

A House Committee created him and a House Committee destroyed him. Under a different system Nixon's talents might have flourished and his drawbacks been nullified. Men just as devious warm the front benches on either side of the House of Commons. The strangest thing is that none of it was necessary. He could have pulled out of the war straight away. Failing that, he could have resisted the liberal opposition by constitutional means. But to a fatal extent he was still the man he had always been. 'The Presidency is not a finishing school,' he says memorably on p.1078, 'It is a magnifying glass.' Judging by his own case, he is only half right. The job did in fact bring out the best in him. But it also magnified the worst. Even as their President, he still felt that the liberals and intellectuals had an unfair advantage. So he tried to preserve his power by extreme means, and if he had not first resigned he would surely have been impeached for it.

The book is well enough done to establish Nixon as a tragic figure and turn the tide of sympathy. It might even put him on the come-back trail. But we ought to keep our heads. The real tragic figures are all in Chile, Vietnam and Cambodia. It is ridiculous to class Nixon with the great villains of modern history, but not so ridiculous to be more angry with him than with them. He should have known better. Nobody sane expects Russia or China to be bound by scruple. The Russians and Chinese, says Nixon – as if their endorsement supported his case – couldn't understand what the Watergate fuss was all about. Of course they couldn't. They have forgotten what freedom feels like. A state in which power does not perpetuate itself has become unimaginable to them.

In certain crucial respects Nixon forgot what America is supposed to mean. Yet the virtues of this book prove that in other respects he didn't. Even now that he has lost everything, he has difficulty seeing himself from the outside. But whatever havoc he might have played with his country's institutions, in these pages he does not betray its free spirit. The book is like a soap-opera, yet the central character emerges as a human being. They were right to throw him down. Here is proof that they were not entirely wrong to raise him up in the first place.

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Richard Cobb

Rixende, Condors, Esclarmonde

Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324 by EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE. *Scolar Press* £12.50

Montaillou is an extraordinarily convincing example of what can be made of local history, in entirely human terms, by a master historian, even over the enormous mental distance of six centuries. For, no doubt like many modern historians, I had previously found the mentalities, the hopes and fears of individuals – assuming that they could indeed ever be isolated – and of groups in a medieval society impenetrable, mysterious, even terrifying, as an order in which the majority of people must have gone about in constant, quaking fear, by day and by night, for their physical survival and for their eventual salvation: a society, in fact, as alien and nightmarish as a picture by Bosch or a portrait of a Burgundian Duke by Van der Weyden.

Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has succeeded in bringing back to life, over this great gulf, the population of an early-14th-century hill village, in the Comté de Foix, giving to almost every inhabitant, in every age-group, a convincing human identity, and placing him or her in an accepted pattern of sociability, within the household, the extended family and, beyond, within the contending, but often overlapping, changeable frameworks of two rival religions, the one official, feared, often resented, the other popular, even populist, each enjoying its own network of patronage, protection and friendship: Catholicism, representing the urban threat from outside, the fiscal burden within; Catharism, anarchical, deeply local, and egalitarian.

It is an amazing achievement, made possible by the author's sensitive historical imagination, his ability to see and to hear, his long acclimatisation to the shape, smell and texture of the South-West, and, above all, by the existence of a document of unique value, at least for this period. Without the minute *enquête* carried out by the meticulous, suspicious Bishop of Pamiers, Jacques Fournier – a local man, born in Saverdun, and so all the more dangerous, (it might have been possible to fob off a northerner or a Lyonnais) in an effort to stamp out the last embers of heresy in these hillside communities, there would have been no *Montaillou*; and there would have been no such *enquête* had not the village itself constituted, at the time, something of a special case, with perhaps three-quarters of the population openly or secretly sympathetic to the *Bonshommes*. What was to be an appalling tragedy for most of the villagers, bringing a number to the stake, many more to the 'wall' in Pamiers or Carcassonne, and culminating in the burning down of the houses of the heretics and their sympathisers, was an opportunity, not unprecedented – for the document had been known for many years, even edited – eagerly taken up, and brilliantly exploited by the leading historian of Languedoc. It is unlikely that such an opportunity will recur, at least as far as this period is concerned, so *Montaillou* is likely to remain in its solitary and peculiar eminence. But the author has also been well served by the minute proportions of a mixed community of farmers, artisans, and shepherds of some 250 persons, reduced by the end of the century to only 23 *feux*: a manageable unit within which it has been possible to reconstruct complete family networks and social hierarchies, and the emergence of (basically two) clans, each enjoying its extended clientèles.

In a review, it is possible only to indicate something of the wealth and variety of a study that covers every aspect of life, from birth to death, and beyond (even in the material form of the fingernails and hairs of the recently deceased, cut off and carefully preserved in an effort to prolong his protection over the *domus*); and which

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provides fully for the banality of daily and nightly existence: personal hygiene, minimal, confined to mouth, face and hands, and family or neighbourly delousing, by the fire or in the sunshine, turn by turn (an opportunity for conversation and gossip, even more favourable than the mill, the *lavoir*, or, for shepherds, the fair), clothing, with its tiny luxuries, sleep (never alone), dreams, the contrast between the sedentary life of the peasant and the itinerant life of the shepherd (taking him far into the relative freedom of Catalonia). Here are the men, sitting at table, on a Sunday or a feast day, or in the evening, the women and children squatting on the floor, in the main room, or even upstairs (a surprising luxury), in houses so fragile that one can put one's hand through the walls, to spy out a smoky interior or to eavesdrop. Here is a friend at night, armed with a stick – for the night has danger, especially from wolves and spirits – who throws a stone against the shutters, to attract the attention of his neighbour and ally (and relative), so that he will let him in. There is plenty of sex, much of it supplied by Clergue, the *curé* – a 14th-century predecessor of that of Uruffe – and by a noblewoman by no means stuck up, *généreuse de sa personne*. Here are three or four people, of both sexes and different generations, huddling in bed for warmth. Here are the shepherds, enjoying the marvellous freedom of the *cols*, walking and talking, two or three together, with an eye to their flocks and to the sky, but none to the beauty of a Pyrenean landscape, attending the fairs in the plain, and crossing and recrossing from the Comté de Foix into the Comté de Barcelone. At once a restricted world, and one opening out to Catalonia, to Compostella, to Lombardy, even to Rome, and offering contacts with Jews and Moriscos.

Scenes of apparent pastoral innocence (but these are not innocent people, though they possess a sense of shame): an old man sunning himself, a group of women gossiping at the mill, child messengers carrying a few words, painfully memorised, from one house to another, from one end of the village to the other, children who replace the written word in an illiterate society. Here is a book 'in Arabic letters', being read out at a *veillée*, passed round, touched with reverence. Here is an old woman dying, 'hereticised' in extremis by the *Bonshommes*, the Perfects, dressed in long blue hooded cloaks. Here are the souls of the elderly dead, so light that they are blown about by the mountain wind like chaff, like pollen, or shoved aside by the energetic and eager souls of the 20 and 30-year-olds, as many dead as alive in a community when the age of Christ is regarded as the fulfilment of a masculine life-span. The author, following the Inquisitor, takes us inside the filthy hovels, we pant after him *par monts et vaux*, and we discover the priest and one of his innumerable mistresses copulating behind the high altar at night. It is *visual* history, because Fournier tried to see everything through the eyes of witnesses mostly illiterate and incapable of expressing themselves in other than visual terms or, at best, in the bizarre abstractions of popular beliefs and superstitions, but also because the historian can see further than the Bishop, has the poetic imagination enabling him to interpret gesture, movement, a walk, a *smile*, tears, a wink, a hand spread out in denial, a hand raised to the sky, a hand splayed out in threat, or in warning, a body bending forward in supplication, arms stretched out in pleading, a figure on its knees, a woman holding, hour after hour, a baby, suckling it absentmindedly as she stirs a pot or listens to gossip.

It is *oral* history, because the Latin of the original is closely related to the limited vocabulary of peasant-spoken 14th-century Montaillou Catalan *patois*, heard and interpreted by the author, who is able to read behind formal words, to pick out the terms of endearment and of threat, and the subtleties of *tutoiement* and *vouvoiement*, upwards and downwards, or between generations, the meaning of nicknames, the oddities of Christian names: Rixende, Condors, Esclarmonde, Ava, Grazide, and the sound of joyful song and strident, formal lamentation.

As revealed in this minute chronicle, Catharism hardly emerges as a religion of extreme severity and deprivation, save for the Perfects; for the sympathisers, on the contrary, it could offer the double attraction of extreme moral laxity, compensated for at the last moment by absolution, and of justified anti-clericalism. In practice, it could be completely anarchical. It is easy to understand why the *Bonshommes* were so popular and why they suited so well the demands of an intense, inbred localism, threatened from outside, above all from Pamiers (Toulouse was at the limit of the interfering world, Paris well beyond it).

One is also surprised at the comparative civility of a sociability designed rather to avoid conflict than to provoke it (in a brilliant aside, the author compares the *Bonshommes* with *juges de paix*). Violence tended to be confined to verbal limits, 'dog' and 'sow' being the standard insults (cats and owls were too much feared thus to be used in everyday language), though the men were heavy-handed on the women; rape was common, outside the family circle; murders were very rare. Natural savagery and lust were tempered by love, by compassion, honour, shame, and the overriding concern for salvation. Incest was seen to have material advantages, and was accepted between second cousins. Children were loved and cherished, even if masculine childhood ended at 12, when the boys could become shepherds.

Fournier, in his obsession with stamping out the rural roots of heresy, sought to grope beyond the banalities of daily life, in order to steal up closer on elusive mentalities: sense of time and of place and distance, the limits of the known world, popular forms of measurement, magic, superstition, and, above all, attitudes to death. And it is this concern that has enabled the historian to push ahead among the dark undergrowth of clumsy abstractions, of rural fears and of a confused rural cosmology.

Perhaps at times he presses his documentation too hard, either seeking to make it prove too much, or elaborating at length on the self-evident. Is it really so remarkable that people should have preferred to share their secrets indoors rather than outside? The village, once the Inquisition got under way, was full of spies and delators. And the fact that three shepherds sleep together up on the hills probably signifies that they did so to keep warm. His section on homosexuality is based on a single case-history, and that urban and clerical. Much of what he has to say about rural sociability and sense of honour in the 14th century can be illustrated from urban sociability and sense of honour in the 18th; and people slept several to a bed then too, in *garnis* in Paris and Rouen. Nor does gesture appear greatly to have altered in those 300 years. If he had checked in his often elaborate sociological kit at the box office, his book could have been much shorter, more historical, and even more enjoyable to read. The 'models' from elsewhere are an encumbrance not a help: 20th-century Kabyls are not 14th-century Montalionais, so why bring them in? There are moments, too, when his arch humour, his modern parallels, and his insistent *franglais*, at least in the French edition (he has spent too long at Princeton), make at least this reader shudder. Why overpaint, when the original, especially in the hands of an interpreter so patient and skilled, is so wonderfully suggestive? *Montaillou* has received such enormous acclaim that there is a particular need for very careful criticism.

But such minor irritants and a vague sense of unease that, at times, too vast an edifice has been raised on the basis of a single document – that the document has on occasion been stretched too far – will only intermittently detract from one's pleasure in reading what is indeed a *chef-*

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James Fenton

Please Please Me

The New Oxford Book of Light Verse chosen by Kingsley Amis *Oxford* £4.25

The New Oxford Book of Light Verse
Is elegant, witty and terse
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It's full of good cheer
That New Oxford Book of Light Verse.

Oh dear. Oh dear. I'm afraid that the OUP copywriters have produced precisely the sort of limerick Mr Amis most despises. The first line is happy enough. The second might seem to be, until one remembers that terseness is not the first quality one looks for in an anthology. The third, while incorrectly describing the scope of the book, draws attention to Mr Amis's least favourite poet. The apostrophe in the fourth ensures the impossibility of its scansion, while the repetitive fifth line is considered by Mr Amis to be quite beneath the dignity of the limerick. Anyone who had read the introduction would have thought long and hard before thus risking his neck.

For Mr Amis is a stringent critic of light verse. 'A concert pianist is allowed a wrong note here and there, a juggler is not allowed to drop a plate.' Light verse revels in difficult forms, which it must make seem easy. It must be perfectly wrought. It must be perfectly comprehensible. It must not be vicious. While it need not be funny, it must not be unfunny. While it may now and then deliver 'a jolt to the gentler emotions', it must not be beautiful or it ceases to be light verse. All in all, there are a lot of musts flying around here. Why should light verse not be beautiful from time to time? Eh? There are several kinds of beauty. I cannot imagine a light poem reaching levels of Wordsworthian sublimity, but I had always imagined Praed's 'Good Night to the Season' (printed here) to be beautiful. Must I desist?

Ought nonsense verse, as Mr Amis says, to yield no sense? Again, there are several kinds of nonsense. One might legitimately argue that no light verse should be completely nonsensical: complete nonsense is the preserve of 'high' modernist verse. Even the splendid 'Oh that my lungs could bleat like buttered peas' (which Mr Amis supposes to have been a contemporary send-

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up of early 17th-century obscurity, although he notes that doubts have been cast on its authenticity – I should say it's late 19th-century academic fun) has its moments of clarity:

> I grant that rainbows being lulled asleep,
> Snort like a woodknife in a lady's eyes,
> Which makes her grieve to see a
> pudding creep,
> For creeping puddings only please the wise.

There is nothing mysterious in the idea of a creeping pudding. There is nothing odd in a foolish lady's grief at the sight. The only thing we don't know is – why should the wise be pleased?

Mr Amis is unhappy with nonsense poets. He allows Carroll his tedious 'Hiawatha's Photographing', while coming down heavily on Lear for supposed faults of whimsicality, repetitiveness and general incompetence. He quotes MacNeice's view that Lear was a fad of the 1920s. That may be, but he was not only a fad of the 1920s. Indeed, has his nonsense ever been out of print? Mr Amis takes exception to the following stanza from 'How pleasant to know . . .':

> He weeps by the side of the ocean,
> He weeps on the top of the hill,
> He purchases pancakes and lotion,
> And chocolate shrimps from the mill.

There is something inconsequential about the pancakes and lotion, and the chocolate shrimps, although they exist, are not normally available from any sort of mill. And besides, one might add, there is no apparent connection between his weeping and his purchases. But is this not characteristic of the whole poem – the way it does not quite add up? Is this not its charm?

> He reads but he cannot speak Spanish,
> He cannot abide ginger-beer:
> Ere the days of his pilgrimage vanish,
> How pleasant to know Mr Lear.

The combative style of Mr Amis's introduction is all very well – it makes for a good read. But one does sometimes feel that the arguments deployed are less than honest. Pope is excluded. Fine. But on grounds of obscurity? If so, how come so much of Samuel Butler has slipped through the net? 'Hudibras' was once a very popular poem, but even in Johnson's day it had begun as it were to fade, primarily, as Johnson pointed out, because it could no longer be easily understood. I find also that, like many poems in tetrameters, it has a tendency to blather on:

> The question then, to state it first,
> Is which is better, or which worst,
> Synods or bears. Bears I avow
> To be the worst, and synods thou.
> But to make good the assertion,
> Thou say'st they're really all one.
> If so, not worst, for if they're idem,
> Why then, tantundem dat tantidem.

This is obscure and slack, and there are thousands more lines where it came from.

I suspect that Mr Amis is slightly ill-at-ease with his task. He wishes to give light verse an ancestry, but he does not wish to be pestered by too many ancestors or relatives. He describes the circumstances of the rise of light verse, and then, for the sake of symmetry, its fall. The fall is less convincing than the rise. It appears that Mr Alan Brownjohn has written a bad poem, and that 'high' verse is therefore in a bad state. If high verse is in a bad state, light verse has nothing to bounce off. Serious contemporary poetry is beyond parody. But, you may say, what about – um – Larkin? He's pretty good, isn't he? But Mr Amis has already forestalled you by printing great wodges of Larkin as light verse (I don't think 'Toads' is very light – do you?). But you may say, if Auden and Betjeman and Larkin and Mr Amis himself have all written light verse in this century, isn't it a bit early to give the thing up for lost? Quite so, and there are omissions . . . But I find that I have not yet said much in favour of this volume.

It's very good. Full of good stuff. I laughed aloud. Mr Amis's selection is at its best during the 19th and early 20th century – at its best, that is, at the crucial period for the art. For the ethos of light verse is very much the same as that of the English man of letters – indeed, we find in general that the enemies of light verse are those who execrate the men of letters. Nobody quite knows what brought about the rise and fall of the man of letters (I say this with some conviction, since the authoritative work on the subject, John Gross's curious book, has nothing to say about a rise, and precious little about a fall – it merely starts and stops); but it is clear that the vices of that trade – cosiness, complacency, philistinism – are closely related to the vices of light verse. Bad light verse is awful to read. We do need an anthologist to shoulder the burden. No wonder Mr Amis was feeling somewhat ratty by the time he came to write his introduction. As to his selection, it bears throughout the imprint of his personality and taste. This makes it controversial, which was doubtless what Mr Amis intended.

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Charley Gordon: An Eminent Victorian Reassessed by CHARLES CHENEVIX TRENCH
Allen Lane £8.95

'Reassessed' is a discouraging word in the sub-title of a new biography. It is scholarly jargon which somehow manages to suggest that previous writers have got it all wrong, and that only now, when our values and standards are perfect and absolute – as those of one's own time always are – can a proper judgment be made; we can see where the old fools went astray, and here is the Word at last. All too often there follows a lordly debunking to suit the prejudices of the present. So it is a relief to discover that Mr Chenevix Trench's admirable biography of 'Chinese' Gordon is not a reassessment in that sense, but a factual and eminently sensible account of a great Victorian character who, for all his heroic celebrity, has tended to remain in the shadows of the post-colonial world. Everyone knows him, of course, but not much about him; the image, thanks to Messrs Korda and Heston, is of the stern, enigmatic figure at the head of the steps, waiting like a patient kirk elder for the dervishes to spear him. In reality, Gordon probably spent his last moments fighting like a tiger, as anyone who knew him and his life would have expected, for he was above all a fighting man. But the resigned, unresisting figure of the Christian soldier-martyr suited the Victorian taste, and so it has remained.

The Khartoum legend, indeed, has done Gordon's memory a disservice; he is remembered chiefly as the victim of yet another imperial foul-up. He was also, perhaps, one of the best irregular soldiers who ever lived; his Chinese campaign, when, as a young man, he turned the rabble of the 'Ever-Victorious Army' into a force which won a series of astonishing victories, showed something close to military genius. Typically, the British authorities never gave him command of a fighting force thereafter, and they may have been right. Brilliant he undoubtedly was, but more than a little touched with that eccentricity which can render brilliance dangerous. 'Half-cracked', 'quite mad', 'a wild man', were contemporary verdicts, and they were not understatements. A man who, at military college, tears off his own epaulettes when rebuked by his superior; who expresses irritation by knocking one man downstairs and stabbing another with a fork; who asks complete strangers, 'Do you believe in Jesus?', and scatters tracts broadcast from railway trains; who leads a storming-party armed only with a cane and smoking a cigar; who devotes his spare time to the poor and needy; who has a blazing temper, changes his mind from one minute to the next, has a fine disregard for authority, and is so obsessed with detail that before an important banquet he personally buys pudding bowls and fills them enthusiastically with tapioca – such a man, especially when he can charm other men into a devotion bordering on worship, is not the kind to whom governments entrust armies unless they have to. Hence Gordon's frustrated years on home posting or boundary commission, warring on outposts with refractory tribes, combating slavers, researching eccentrically in Palestine, flirting with the notion of becoming Leopold's man

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in the Congo – in the light of history it looks like a wasted progress to the tragic climax at Khartoum.

That was a botched, misunderstood, emotion-charged business. Gordon's reputation as a troubleshooter was such that it was wrongly assumed that he could restore the situation in the Sudan virtually single-handed; the Gladstone government, having dispatched him without written orders, and with no clear idea themselves whether his job was to report back or to evacuate before the Mahdi's forces, procrastinated shockingly before sending relief. In fairness it should be said that Gordon wasn't an easy man to relieve; Mr Chenevix Trench justly reflects that in a similar case a modern government would be reluctant to send even a helicopter for fear of offending enlightened opinion. In the event Gordon fought his last fight with characteristic skill and courage, the relief expedition arrived two days too late, and in the furious public reaction another legend was born.

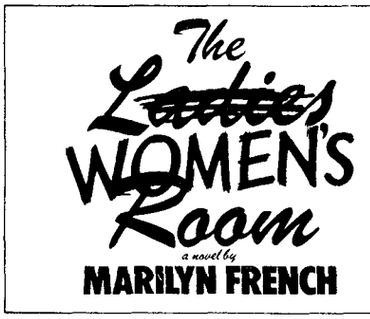
Unlike Gordon's contemporaries, Mr Chenevix Trench treats his subject, and Gordon's complex and attractive character, with perception and great common sense; he plainly likes his man – it would be hard not to – but makes no special pleas for him. Faults he had, in plenty, although not so many, perhaps, as rumour has suggested; it has been thought that he was homosexual, and certainly he was a bachelor with an unusual affection for young boys, but his biographer can find no evidence to support the whispers; he could drink heavily – he

Vernon Scannell

Protest Poem

It was a good word once, a little sparkler,
Simple, innocent even, like a
hedgerow flower,
And irreplaceable. None of its family
Can properly take over: *merry* and *jolly*
Both carry too much weight; *jocund*
and *blithe*
Were pensioned off when grandpa was alive;
Vivacious is a flirt; she's lived too long
With journalists and advertising men.
Spritely and *spry*, both have a nervous tic.
There is no satisfactory substitute.
It's down the drain and we are going
to miss it.
No good advising me to go ahead
And use the word as ever. If I did
We know that someone's bound to
smirk or snigger,
Of all the epithets why pick on this one?
Some deep self-mocking irony?
Or blindfold stab into the lexicon?
All right. Then let's call heterosexuals *sad*,
Dainty for rapists, *shy* for busy flashers,
Numinous for necrophiles, *quaint*
for stranglers;
The words and world are mad:
I must protest
Although I know my cause is lost.
A good word once, and I'm disconsolate
And angered by this simple syllable's fate:
A small innocence gone, a little Fall.
I grieve the loss. I am not gay at all.

FICTION



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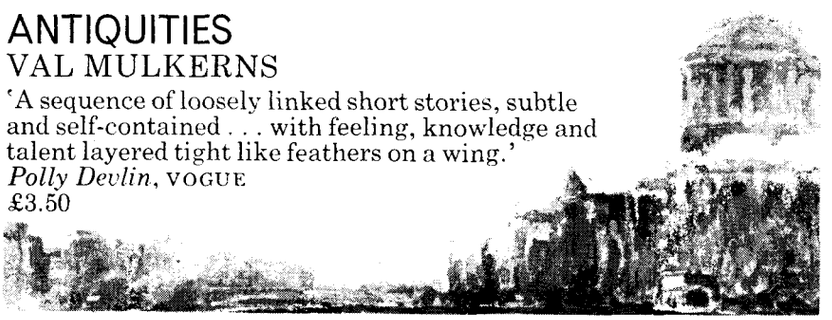

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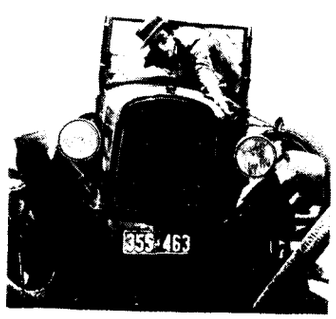

ANDRE DEUTSCH

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was also a chain-smoker – but the bottle never got the better of him. Erratic, impulsive, genial, explosive, arrogant, charming, and, of course, a mad sapper, he is impossible to pin down. There is a nice little story, which Gordon himself would have delighted in, of the small boy who was shown the famous statue of the hero, mounted on his camel. That, they told the child reverently, was Gordon's statue. Impressed, the child took to visiting the statue frequently, and then one day inquired: 'Daddy, who is the man on Gordon's back?' We will probably never be quite sure.

John Keegan

Stage Fight

Nelson by DAVID WALDER *Hamish Hamilton* £12.50

If asked to supply one universally valid explanation for young men wishing to become officers, I would suggest (after considering but discarding all the obviously masculine reasons) possession of the theatrical temperament. The military – and naval – life is intensely theatrical, and the places in which its rudiments are taught more like academies of dramatic art than any other comparable educational institution. Of course much professional knowledge is imparted there. But the great informing theme of the officer's training (*formation* is the more revealing French word) is the 'presentation of self' – as subordinate to superior, superior to subordinate, equal to equal, on duty, off duty, in the mess, on the parade-ground, and ultimately in the theatre of operations.

The natural actor, whose art conceals art, has therefore a head start over his less gifted military contemporaries. To him the tricks of self-presentation come easily – posture, gesture, inflexions of voice, modulations of tone, carry, timing – by which a successful performer establishes his dominance over the rest of the company. And indeed many officers make perfectly successful careers, if usually in time of peace, out of little more than a greater ability to look and sound soldierly than their brother officers possess. If the latter acquiesce in the unfairness of it, it is because they can no more help wanting to be soldiers than actors actors.

But an officer is not of course merely a performer. If he were, he would opt immediately for the stage, a career for which he usually has a considerable contempt. What impresses in the military world is the ability to combine a good performance with adventure and exposure to risk (which suggests that officers are really more like actresses and helps to explain why the two professions so rarely intermarry, one diva usually being enough in the family). And that being the case, where lies the wonder in the life of Nelson? For, as David Walder's massive new biography of the admiral so accurately pinpoints, Nelson combined relentless, compulsive, overweening theatricality with totally uncalculating physical bravery.

The latter was a vital mitigation of the former. For Nelson's theatrical art concealed no art at all. A Donald Wolfit of naval warfare, his posturings and childlike pleasure in baubles and fancy dress at times nauseated even his patrons and most devoted subordinates. 'The foolish little fellow', wrote Jervis of his protégé after their joint victory at Cape St Vincent, 'has sat to every artist in London'; and, though that was an exaggeration, it is certainly true that we possess a remarkable number of portraits of a man who enjoyed fame only for the last eight years of his life. His greed for decorations was unconcealed. Offered the appropriate baronetcy after Cape St Vincent, he argued his way to the lesser distinction of a Knighthood of the Bath, because it would bring him a star and red sash to wear on his uniform. In 1801, when he was already a British Viscount and a Sicilian Duke, he happily added to the Bath the insignia of a Knight Grand Commander of the Most Illustrious Order Equestrian Secular and Capitular of St Joachim, though he must have had strong grounds for suspecting, correctly, that its mountebank creator wished him to have it in order more readily to sell it in the market for honours. And the Order of the Crescent which he displayed after the Nile was indeed retrospectively created by the Ottoman Emperor on discovering that that was how Nelson was describing the purely personal decoration he had conferred on him for the victory of Aboukir.

None of this mattered, then or now. As his friend Colonel Drinkwater wrote of the Bath episode, 'if such pre-eminent talents as those of this most extraordinary man could be so cheaply purchased the English nation . . . situated as she then was, had only to approve and applaud his moderation'. Petitioning for a pension after the loss of his arm in 1797, he stated that he had 'actually been engaged against the Enemy upwards of one hundred and twenty times'. David Walder finds it difficult to square the claim with his service record, but rightly dismisses the inconsistency. From his fight with a polar bear in 1773 to his fatal parading on the quarterdeck of *Victory* in 1805, Nelson simply did not count the risks when the enemy were in sight. He had already been badly hurt in the siege of Calvi before suffering the wound which cost him the sight of his eye. He suffered an internal injury in the boarding of the Spanish ships at Cape St Vincent, the pain from which he uncomplainingly endured for the rest of his life; and he was thus half-blind and ruptured when leading the attack against Tenerife in which he lost his right arm above the elbow.

All this might have made him no more than a Ritchie-Hook of the Napoleonic wars, a title for which he has competitors. But on top of theatricality and the compensating ballast of bravery, Nelson had strategic genius. That is not a word to be lightly tossed about. It must be distinguished from tactical flair, which he also possessed in abundance. That is demonstrated by his refusal to notice Parker's signal calling off action at Copenhagen, by his unorthodox pulling out of the line at Cape St Vincent, by his snap decision to go inshore of the French at the Nile and, though pioneered by Rodney at the Saints, by his 'breaking of the enemy line from to windward' at Trafalgar. But tactical judgment of that sort would not have helped him to victory in the campaigns either of Trafalgar or the Nile, when in each case his task was to bring to battle an enemy who had escaped from blockade on to the freedom of the high seas. Wireless, radar and satellite surveillance have today robbed the admiral's art of its ancient mystery. Without anything but infrequent and fragmentary clues, Nelson both in 1798 and 1805 correctly anticipated the movements of the enemy over distances of hundreds and thousands of miles respectively, kept his fleet within striking range of his adversaries and ultimately brought both triumphantly to battle. For David Walder's money, the chase to the Nile is the more convincing demonstration of the admiral's skill, and his dissection of Nelson's true and false anticipations of the enemy's moves and correction of his own errors convincingly bears out

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his judgment. Nelson, having passed Napoleon's fleet in the night, observed by the French but unalerted himself, actually arrived in Aboukir bay ahead of his enemy; finding it deserted, he at once set course for the coast of Anatolia, the alternative place of descent he had decided Napoleon contemplated; and, finding that deserted, he backed his original judgment and returned to Aboukir, at which the French had indeed by then arrived. Few commanders have displayed such confidence in the logicality of their own appreciations. His victories were not the fruit of happenstance.

As the world knows, his conduct of his personal life was less calculating and less rational. For all his theatricality, he possessed the true leader's gift of attracting the devotion of other men without in the least seeming to seek it or be aware that it was offered. In his relations with women he was not one whit the magnetiser or the conqueror. Retrospectively this makes him all the more attractive, and it is a particular strength of David Walder's treatment that he conveys the almost feminine nature of Nelson's sexuality. A timid suitor, an attentive, tender and apparently genuinely loving husband to the widowed Mrs Nesbit, he allowed himself to be overwhelmed by the amazing Emma Hamilton and to be made a fool by his love for her throughout the remaining five years of his life. It was the supreme sacrifice in the career of this great professional that he yielded the stage, not merely uncomplainingly but adoringly, to one of history's great starlets.

A. J. P. Taylor

Circular Tour

A Guide to the London Countryway by KEITH CHESTERTON *Constable* £3.50

Ways are among the most beneficent inventions of the postwar era, rivalling the ingenuity of the ancient Britons. I have walked most of the Pennine Way and Offa's Dyke Way and have sampled stretches of half-a-dozen others. All were in fairly remote country. I never hoped to be offered 200 miles of country-walking that could be covered by daily sallies from the centre of London. Keith Chesterton has devised this miracle and his book lets us into the secret.

Most of the London Countryway exploits the Green Belt, now somewhat tarnished, and we are also given such experiences as the path through the power station at Tilbury which is entirely enclosed by metal grilles. The London Countryway is also a culture tour, taking in Windsor Castle, St Alban's Cathedral, Waltham Abbey, the Coldrum Stones and innumerable parish churches, all of them worth a detour. I am not sure this combination is wise. Sightseeing takes time that should be devoted to walking and so reduces the daily mileage. However, one can Yarrow the sights as Wordsworth did. A great

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JOHN MURRAY

merit of the Way is that each stretch starts and ends at points where public transport is available. This is not as good news as it sounds. Most of us make our country forays on Sundays, and in England, as in no other European country, public transport is much rarer on Sundays than during the week.

I wish I could say that Chesterton's book is the London Countryway made easy. It seems so on first reading. But closer examination reveals the old stories of public footpaths obstructed or leading across a ploughed field, ditches and streams where the bridges have rotted away, and bulls, though I have never encountered one. I know that I shall be at a loss within half an hour of setting out. Experience also tells me that everything works out all right in the end, and no walk is satisfactory unless you have to fend for yourself now and then. Chesterton even provides instructions on how to use a compass, for me a desperate remedy. Nor is he content with sightseeing. He is meticulous in his recording of public houses, describing both the company you are likely to encounter and the brew of beer served. In fact this delightful book is a compendium of our present enthusiasms – country-walking, sightseeing and real ale.

The book is a pleasure to read, its historical facts nearly always correct. The only exception I noted was the statement that John Hampden was killed by Prince Rupert, perhaps excusable as a romantic exaggeration. On the other hand full justice is done to Gatton, one of my favourite spots, both as walker and as historian. I have not yet tried the book as a practical guide, and here I have my doubts. Each section is described twice, first in general terms of its natural features and the things to see, then in technical detail with first right, half-left and so on. It will demand much leafing of pages to keep both types of description going. Perhaps the solution is to have two copies of the book with two readers keeping up a litany as in the services of the Church of England. A group could provide responses such as 'no gap here', 'I've found it' or even 'I've fallen in'.

No book is perfect. Here is a final grumble. The walks are measured in miles. But the detailed stretches are recorded in metres. What are metres doing in a book dedicated to the glories of old England? Yards are part of our heritage and I am sorry Chesterton has been a traitor within the gates.

Among this week's contributors:

RICHARD COBB is Professor of Modern History at Oxford. His books include *A Second Identity: Essays on France and French History* (1969) and *Reactions to the French Revolution* (1972).

GEORGE MACDONALD FRASER's most recent novel is *Flashman's Lady*.

JOHN KEEGAN is the author of *The Face of Battle*; he is Senior Lecturer in War Studies at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

ZAHIR JAMAL is currently engaged on a study of Orwell. He teaches English at the University of Nottingham.

PHILIP LARKIN's most recent collection of poems is *High Windows*.

Philip Larkin

Archery

The Woddis Collection by ROGER WODDIS
Barrie & Jenkins £3.50

This collection is considerably overdue, for Roger Woddis has been delighting NEW STATESMAN readers since about 1970, and topical pieces normally don't survive their time: it may be, of course, that their late republication is evidence of his worth. However, James Cameron's Sport-on-Two introduction ('the supreme parodist of our time . . . The man, you see, is just consistently bloody brilliant') compels the reviewer to even things up to a little. Let us, for instance, not forget 'Sagittarius', the NS house poet from 1935-55, who may not have invented the device of writing a new funny poem in the manner of an old serious one, but who certainly used it, which makes Mr Cameron's description of it as 'his formula' rather over-fair to Woddis. Then again, if parody is a composition in which an author's characteristics are humorously imitated (as the *Concise Oxford* declares), Woddis is not a parodist:

> I nipped down the platform, and Doris,
> and he;
> I sprinted, Dick sprinted, we sprinted
> all three;
> 'Good God!' cried a passenger, mother
> of two;
> 'Get back!' said a bloke who was head
> of the queue.
> We elbowed two nuns, a right couple
> of bags,
> And in the compartment we lit up
> our fags . . .

This may be funny, but it has nothing to do with Browning. The one parody in this collection (of Dylan Thomas: 'In my loins throbbed a prude of lions') is well enough, but not in the Beerbohm class. To write about an IRA bomber in the frame of Yeats's 'The Song of Wandering Ængus' is bitterly magnificent satire, but too often the reader is left wondering what this poem has to do with that subject, unless it is to provide Woddis with a ready-made stanza form.

Thirdly, Woddis (like 'Sagittarius' before him) is a little like a comedian playing the clubs: he knows his audience and their prejudices, and this gives his poems a flying start. The Queen, America, businessmen, Barclay's Bank, any prime minister, Sir John Betjeman, North Sea oil, private medicine and so on are either silly or wicked (or both), and if anyone disagrees, get him up and be gone as one shaped awry: he disturbs the order here. The test of a political satirist is whether he can make the other side laugh: 'it is very difficult,' as Johnson said, 'to please a man against his will.' Would the average *Daily Telegraph* reader say: 'But the dog was so very comical that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back in my chair, and fairly laugh it out'? Only, I think, sometimes.

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Laughter, of course, is not always Woddis's aim. He can be coldly disgusted, as on the call for 'humane' (i.e. non-hanging) capital punishment:

Full many a way, beside the guillotine,
Would teach the would-be killer to beware,
Full many a means, that few would
find obscene,
From death by gassing to the electric chair.

Perhaps by poison or the firing squad,
Perhaps a ritual burning at the stake,
The malefactor goes to meet his God,
Bemused by drugs but perfectly awake.

Almost any quotation shows Woddis's prime virtues: plain language, impeccable rhythm, spot-on rhymes that almost prove his point in themselves, and the beautiful inevitability of natural word-order, as when Wilson muses (Woddis's word) on his early ambition to be Poet Laureate:

If fate could change the lives of men
And deal a different card,
Who would be now at Number Ten
And who the Royal Bard?
If Betjeman heard the Commons bell
And I were writing verse,
I might not do his job so well,
But would he do mine worse?

Woddis is less sombre, more hilarious than 'Sagittarius' (perhaps she had more to be sombre about); he delights in Lord Longford's report that Myra Hindley has recently been reading *Murder in the Cathedral*:

Sometimes the porn has appalled me,
Sometimes the notices are good,
One year the raspberries are abundant,
Another year support is lacking.
Yet I have gone on loving,
Loving and partly loony . . .

The risk any poet runs in collecting his poems is that they may look less good together than separate, and this especially so when they first appear islanded in political prose. There is the danger, too, that events will overtake them: I suspect that this has happened to 'Action Stations' ('Now let us clobber the work-to-rule robber'), the 1972 irony of which has noticeably tarnished. But these poems earn reissue by reason of their exuberance, their professionalism, their sheer *literacy*, and this we should treasure. It was not until I saw an advance copy of Kingsley Amis's *New Oxford Book of Light Verse* that I discovered that Woddis is in fact older than I am. This explains a lot. It is hard to believe that he will have a successor.

Ted Walker

The Ram

is his testicles. Will serve
a hundred ewes, easy. Fat

wethers blether wifeless on
the long moors, delectable,

soft as shawls; but he, apart,
accepts his special food. Tough

in his sour wool he grows old
and uneatable. Will butt,

from machismo, anyone
with tender hands. In autumn

he sets about his labour;
looks over his Roman nose,

selects where to begin. Thumps
in ramstam till it's done, black
scrotum tight with tottery lambs.

Zahir Jamal

Little Knell

Guardians and Angels: Parents and Children in 19th-Century Literature by DAVID GRYLLS *Faber* £6.50

Feeble-mindedness, mortal dread and piety are commonly thought to be the qualities the Victorians prized in their young. An extensive literature in the period warmly registers the impact of stern ideas of nurture. In bottomless discourse the Victorians earnestly pondered the harsh phenomenon of their own upbringing. Hence the popular impression that theirs was an age of unrivalled hardship for youth. But as David Grylls observes in his sharp and zestful study: 'In the treatment of children, we might usefully remember, the Victorians' failings were largely recorded by other Victorians.'

Grylls starts from the argument that the proliferation through the century of writing for and about children is itself evidence of growing lenity. Eyeing some of the constitution-wrecking gospel that got wheeled to the nursery door might suggest the reverse; but Dr Grylls's point is that before 1798 literary interest in toddlers is, with rare exceptions, perfunctory. But then to Milton or Bunyan such interest would have seemed incomprehensible. The Puritan infant, they knew, was conceived in sin and entered the world in wickedness. Its depraved state warranted only swift conversion to adult grace. That parental concern should extend beyond effecting this deliverance, nothing in their joyless theology remotely advised. Placed against the moral temper of preceding times, the standard portraits of Victorian domesticity are importantly enhanced. Grylls is not out, how-

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ever, merely to claim that things could have been worse: from exhaustive reserves of exhausting reading he shows that, as the age wore on, parent-child attitudes changed, amid hectic and often comic perplexities, for the better.

Neither the improvements nor their causes were simple; and Grylls is well aware that the cultural interactions of a period cannot be explicated conclusively from its literature alone. But his aim is less to establish indisputable facts of social behaviour than to chronicle popular values as they reached and permeated that literature. The job, he needs no telling, requires a command of awesome quantities of rubbish; and Grylls is formidably acquainted with the crushing syllabus of uplift produced for Victorian adults and children alike. Tireless attendance at the domestic debates of innumerable periodicals like *Hogg's Instructor* and *Once A Week* provides much of his information and not a little of his sport, while a spirited course of children's fiction affords revealing glimpses of the adult imagination in weightily gamesome mood. Nor do his searches end there. His study culminates in a detailed before-and-after comparison of Jane Austen with Dickens and a sceptical appraisal of the filial resentments of Samuel Butler and Edmund Gosse. What these vigorous exertions turn up is that about child-raising, as about much else, the Victorians were frequently and deeply confused.

Confusion, expectably, is what ensues when the teachings of Wesley are enjoined alongside those of Rousseau. While Evangelists resurrected the old Puritan belief in infant wickedness the Romantics were unearthing the notion of childhood innocence. Public opinion fractured in two. 'Hard' and 'soft' schools of nurture took their cases to the journals while the irresolute stood about in antithetical disarray. Grylls mercilessly spotlights the Rev. R. F. Horton who, as late as 1887, chose with more zeal than judgment to preach a sermon in the *Sunday Magazine* on the texts 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord' and 'Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath'. The lesson, in two parts, moves fitfully. Obedience is commended to Horton's non-existent child readers by means of a fatuous mnemonic and some solemn fantasy about Christ's boyhood. The message for parents proves more troublesome. What could St Paul have intended? Were he writing today would he not 'utter a warning on the other side before deprecating the wrath of fathers'? Horton thinks he would: '"Parents, control your children in the Lord", I can easily imagine him saying.' The point, apparently, is that St Paul was writing well before lenience had actually dethroned parents. Hence his peculiar indulgence. But the manoeuvre has not altogether quelled Horton's doubts. In fact he thinks that 'we have here one of the most difficult precepts in the Bible to carry out consistently'. Baffled, Horton retires amid mutters about the unreasonableness of being expected to 'repress natural instincts' in the young 'without arousing the wrathful element'.

Much of Grylls's evidence is of this order. On page after page the exactions of wit elicit a Hortonian bemusement that testifies to the unsettling march through the Victorian mind of more liberal sentiments. Indeed, as Horton's embarrassment shows, a reaction was imminent. Others, however, took a brighter view of the successes of the 'soft' movement. 'Mrs Ewing's genial teachings', an 1887 article declares of children's books, 'have superseded Mrs Sherwood's grim severities'. This may have been optimistic. Certainly fairy-tale and enchantment boldly tripped into juvenile fiction with *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865, but stiff gruel-mongers like Charlotte Yonge and Mrs Gatty were still open for business through the 1870s. Didacticism clung on but, like other items of 'hard' schooling, it had become controversial by the century's end; and Grylls's hilarious account of the wretched disguises it took, in growing despondency, to sprouting is one of the best things in his study.

The feeling that children are really shrunken adults is never quite absent from 19th-century fiction. However, as Grylls's comparison of Jane Austen and Dickens underlines, it came, oddly, to cohabit with a recognition of childhood's rights. One sign of this is a shifting emphasis on parental duty. About delinquent parents both authors are caustic, but Jane Austen's principles of child-management comprise only the old certainties: firmness, authority, discipline and prudence. Dickens, while reserving the right of parents to be overbearing, capricious and demanding, introduces them to a novel obligation. They must display imagination. Enough to grasp the alien separateness of childhood's state, its independence of adult whim and belief. Perhaps Grylls is too hopeful in venturing this as Dickens's characteristic position in the debate. It is, for instance, entirely typical of Dickens that he should berate Mr Dombey for robbing Paul of his childhood and at the same time hugely enjoy simpering with his readers over the amenable runt the theft creates. Inconsistency, Grylls elsewhere shows he knows quite well, was the least of Dickens's worries.

The idea, nevertheless, caught on. Concessions rained down on the child. The Fifth Commandment retreated before 'the new affection'. Successive legislation raised the age of employment and re-defined the ministry of parenthood. A public grew up receptive to grievances like those of Butler and Gosse who took their fathers to court in imaginative literature. Adults, while confessing not to know where innovations like comfortable nurseries and 'dangerous projects like free dinners for all at school' would lead, recognised everywhere the changed mood. The process, 'confused, distressing and comic', finds in this study its most penetrating and faithful re-creation.

Alan Ryan

Overdoses

What's Wrong with the Modern World? by MICHAEL SHANKS *Bodley Head* £3.95

Brief and brisk though this book contrives to be, it would have been even briefer, I fear, if Michael Shanks had set out to tell us what was *right* with the modern world. The First World suffers from the disease of stagflation, a phenomenon as unlovely as its name; the Second World suffers from tyranny, inefficiency and a technique for coping with inflationary pressures which boils down to pretending they don't exist for years and eventually acknowledging them by doubling or tripling prices overnight; the Third World has too many

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DENT

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people, too little food, not enough raw materials of value to the developed industrial nations, and not much chance of spontaneous industrial take-off. As if this weren't enough, the social structure of much of the Western world at least is an advanced state of decay.

Thus, one of Mr Shanks's claims is that the process which is the despair of all good Keynesians – the combination of intractably high rates of unemployment and equally alarming rates of inflation – is in part the result of the state's demands on output. The state's demands for resources for the social services are, of course, perfectly proper; but lots of jobs the state does badly would not need doing at all if families, churches and local communities were doing them. Caring for the elderly, keeping the young out of jail, pointing the work-shy in the direction of a job, and so on, are done expensively by the state because they are not adequately coped with by unofficial means. Though Mr Shanks does not dwell on it, it is also arguable that even at the most sordidly commercial level such observations suggest that the social services are not getting value for money from their expenditure; it ought to be possible to keep a man out of jail for less than the £80 a week it costs to keep him inside. Only in East Asia, he thinks, can we see a social order which imposes the degree of discipline and unity of purpose needed by any society which hopes for economic growth without too much quarrelling about who gets what.

Of course, all this is familiar enough, and Mr Shanks claims no great novelty for his gloomy premises. The problem is to get from them to conclusions other than that we should all take an overdose of something painlessly fatal. And here he is notably unbrisk and uncertain. He has every reason for hesitation, for the familiar faces of the vicious and virtuous circles haunt everyone who tries to think of institutional remedies for our problems. Countries with few, large industrial unions, whose members are amenable to discipline, can easily get them to make moderate wage demands; and since the result is general prosperity, everyone has an incentive to go on behaving in this virtuous and responsible fashion. Countries in the British position – and the modern world in which Mr Shanks is interested mostly comes down to the UK – start with chaotic industrial relations, and rarely have the resources to purchase good behaviour.

Quite what Mr Shanks supposes we can do about it is unclear. There is some pretty inconclusive discussion of how to get workers' and employers' organisations together without ending up with a fully-fledged corporate state; but it's hard to feel that almost two decades of Neddy and his offspring have been such a success that more of the same is the best we can look forward to. Nor, indeed, is it entirely obvious that in thinking of improvements we should frighten ourselves by visions of the corporate state; before Mussolini gave the whole idea a bad name, there was a perfectly respectable tradition of Guild Socialism. It is certainly true that the great objection to corporatism is that there is a risk of the unincorporated being clobbered by a conspiracy of the incorporated. But what Mr Shanks is after is a remedy for the chaos of a society in which the old disciplines of the marketplace have broken down (the command economy and the one-party state he rightly rejects as solutions a lot nastier than the problems they solve). And, call it what you like, a state which contrives to run a mixed economy by organising the negotiations between organised labour and its employers is some kind of corporate state. If it preserves democratic institutions, too, it is simply an unalarming corporate state.

John Sturrock

Bad Behaviour

De Sade by RONALD HAYMAN *Constable* £6.95

Sade had a full name – Donatien-Alphonse-François, Marquis de Sade – worth a head start to any fledgling debaucher of working-class girls. And a head start was very much what he needed, for he hadn't the build to go with his birth or his glorious name: he was chronically overweight and he stood a measly 5ft 3ins, a height that leads a man more often to complexes than to worthwhile conquests. He had moreover an unusual sex problem, one of *ejaculatio* not *prae* but *post-cox*: he didn't, to be blunt, come easily. Ronald Hayman quotes a fascinating letter written in a private code by Sade to his wife from his cell in the Bastille in 1784 in which he blames this seminal blockage on the 'extreme thickness' of his discharge. It hurt him physically and distressed him emotionally; he found masturbation easier. This is a condition we should have been told more about. Was Sade's sperm really so thick, or did he only imagine that it was, in order to have a reassuring biological explanation of the difficulties he went through when making love? And why should it have flowed any differently when he masturbated? A biography should pause here for expert medical evidence to be taken; but Hayman's doesn't: it plods anti-climactically on.

This incuriosity is, I am afraid, typical of his book, which is impervious to the excitements and strangenesses of its subject. Sade was a complicated man and an unexpectedly artful writer; Hayman is a simple man and his literary judgments tend to the elementary – how *can* he have written a book on the late F. R. Leavis? Certainly he does his duty by the facts of Sade's life but when he ventures to rise above them, to psychologise or to evaluate the libertine philosophy, his remarks are an embarrassment. 'He was, in any case, not a pervert in the cradle' (oh no? What about Freud's polymorphously perverse infants?); 'Blasphemy is never logical'; '. . . it is impossible to be sadistic towards a thing': the mad, bad Marquis is not to be understood in chuckle-headed terms like these.

Sade's life was not what a biographer wants – it was disastrously uneventful. Much of it he spent locked up, first in a series of fortresses and prisons and ultimately in the lunatic asylum of Charenton,

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where he was hosed brutally down with cold water to take some of the heat out of his brain, a logical but unsuccessful regimen. In his years at large as a young army officer he behaved badly even by the standards of his class and time and, what was worse as it turned out, he made a bitter enemy of his mother-in-law. He was spectacularly unfaithful to his wife and at one point ran off with her sister; but it is possible that the vindictive Madame de Montreuil pursued him with her iniquitous *lettres de cachet* less to avenge the dishonours done to her daughters than because she felt a guilty lust for him herself.

Three celebrated indiscretions got Sade into hot water, and the legal records survive. The first, with a teenage fan-maker, was a dry run: Sade had the whips neatly laid out on the bed in readiness for some flagellation, but the girl wasn't willing and he had to fall back on various schoolboy profanations instead. The second time he went further, and achieved an orgasm after thrashing a more compliant girl with a cat-o'-nine-tails. For the third such episode, in Marseille, no great distance from the Sade family seat, the numbers went up from two to six and the staging was more elaborate. There were four girls, a valet and the ringmaster himself, who apparently organised them into some of those crazily interlocking tableaux which are the hallmark of his erotic writings: he whipped a girl with one hand while apparently masturbating the valet with the other.

We know of these devilries because Sade was reported for them, and for the Marseille affair he was actually sentenced to death: for poisoning – he had handed out doses of Spanish Fly to get the girls in the mood – and sodomy, then a hanging matter. He left for Italy but was recaptured. The death sentence was eventually set aside, but he was seldom out of prison thereafter, except during the Revolution. By then his money and his health had both gone; he lived in poverty and complained of the cost of living. He emerged from captivity as a militant Republican and even held local office for a time in Paris. But as a former officer in the king's army he was also suspect, and missed being guillotined only through official incompetence. He was imprisoned for the last time in 1801, and by the dirtiest trick of all: denounced for obscenity by his own publisher. He died in Charenton in 1814, at the age of 74.

It was in prison that Sade became a writer, when sex necessarily went to his head. His thoughts became more mobile and more violent with the terrible inactivity of his body. He never learned to write well – his written French is flat and bureaucratic. His philosophy, if that is the word for it, is 18th-century naturalism taken to the limit, a call for nature to replace society as the source of values. The fact that nature can ask contradictory things of us at different times and in different ages did not deter him. Sade's of course is the voice of a certain tired and exasperated culture.

His erotic novels are both fantastic and strangely orderly. Vast amounts of semen are spilled and all possible forms of bodily conjunction explored. There are no rest periods; appetite, for food as well as for sex, is magically restored the instant it has been satisfied. It is all highly systematic. And Sade had great insight into what he was doing, which was substituting accounts of sex for the act of sex; there is a deep theatricality in these books. What they lack utterly is realism, something that Ronald Hayman, with his weirdly inappropriate chatter about 'suspense' and about Sadian heroines being 'pulled out of character', obviously can't do without. The incarcerated Sade wrote about what he felt he most wanted. In his books it was these impossible ecstasies of sexual gratification, in his letters home more bourgeois comforts such as 'clean linen, candles and meringues'.

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Valentine Cunningham

Writing

Caught by HENRY GREEN *Hogarth Press* £4.25
Concluding by HENRY GREEN *Hogarth Press* £4.50
Laughable Loves by MILAN KUNDERA translated by Suzanne Rappaport *Murray* £4.95

Henry Green's people are customarily caught, hemmed in, cut off, locked into blindness or deafness, into working-class poverty or wealthy solipsism. Like the rich travellers in *Party Going* enclosed by fog and the steel shutters of the station hotel, they're scarcely able to contrive a getaway. Even if they dodge out of the parenthesis made by apocalyptic wars behind and ahead, they only slip into another confinement – out of the frustrations of *Party Going* (1939), in fact, into the horrors of *Caught* (1943). Into still further uneasy waiting for the end, the more-than-hellish pre-Blitz limbo, when Richard Roe, bourgeois and deaf like his author, falls, also like his author, into the proletarian clutches of London's Auxiliary Fire Service.

'So you're having a quiet time still, fireman,' a civilian jibes in a pub. The test, the holocaust, lies ahead, of course, reserved from our direct confrontation for a series of marvellous and aweing forewords and afterwords. But it requires heroes to hang about for incineration. It's certainly no quiet time. Especially for Roe, his wife dead, his son in the country, and every move a hazard for a wealthy man anxious to get on the right side of the workers. Summoned to duty, he hurries to the assembly point not only wrongly kitted but also to be spotted furtively paying off the taxi. He sees himself as having become a labourer ('one of the thousand million that toiled and spun'); the firemen wonder if he's a ponce.

But Green's crafty plot won't let you feel sorry for Roe alone. The others are caught too: by the 'Brigade mind'; by the rules they know, and that know them, too well; by the culs-de-sac of prole talk, the bad food, the endless etiolation of the darkened

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station. Officer Pye has a sister in an asylum; Pye will end in the gas oven. The attentively crafted prose unites all their desires. They all want those enticing mouths of girls that so alluringly fill this novel – 'the bloom of a thousand moist evenings in August on the wet skin and, on the inner side of the lips, where the rouge had worn off, opened figs wet on a wall'. Roe 'nibbles' his wife's memory; Pye recalls the girl who mouthed jam off his face. But they're all stuck now with grisly dentures in glum chasms of mouths, the 'purple faces with gaping throats fringed by green gaps for teeth'. No one plays off lavish desire and savage actuality better than Henry Green.

In the end, *Caught*'s verdict is less dismal than simply mixed. Blitz is awful, but Roe survives. Whether he's a hero is left open, and openness is, of course, a way of escape, if only formally. It's a device that *Concluding* (1948) uses to relieve, even comically to relieve, the pressures of mortality crowding its deafly ancient hero, Mr Rock.

Where *Caught* regrets the social infringements war brings (rampant proles: nannies gone; the local school corrupting bourgeois childish tones), *Concluding* disconcerts itself with a State system that has 'lifted everything', including a great house which has become a finishing school for female State servants. Indignations that Green formerly reserved for Eton – a fascist state in miniature, he thought – were now turned in the period of post-war nationalisation on to this State school system. Like the State, the girls are all faceless (all their names begin with M); the principals, Miss Edge and Miss Baker, are a fantasising music-hall turn, cutting comics, scheming to rid the place of Rock, a great man retired to his pig, his swill, and his loony daughter Liz. Every man and woman's hand is against his neighbour's.

It's Cold Comfort Farm done by Buñuel. Earnestly, everyone wants to break free. Some evaders of surveillance may even be succeeding: one girl may have got away; several may be enjoying extra-curricular guidance from randy old Adams the woodsman; Liz may marry the economics tutor. But no one is sure: certainties like that are cannily withheld in a world of hints and guesses. 'Everything settles itself in the end,' Rock, nearing his end, popping into the year's-end dance, and about to end the novel's day in bed, is made to reflect. 'All's well that ends well,' his daughter opines. But even about her erotic life, 'we shall never know the truth'. 'What I mean is' (Liz again) 'we none of us know, do we.' This way, ever sensationally versatile, Henry Green leaps in *Concluding* for a modernist mode: it raises, if only momentarily, the prison-house shades that his fictions close so affectingly about themselves.

The shortest of reports on Czech exile Milan Kundera's stories implies no reflection on their considerable merits. Amid stern actualities, Kundera gamely concocts (like Sterne, and hence unsternly) stories about people playing games. Games – fictions, like these stories – that turn serious: between young and aging lovers, or art-historians, or a would-be lover and his fancied's God. 'Nobody will laugh'; no, because bravely laughing is, in these fictions, only to stop yourself crying.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Spurling

High Anxiety

Cézanne: The Late Work *Grand Palais*

Whether because of the events of 1776 and 1815 or some purely practical consideration – such as the reluctance of owners to be parted too long from their treasures – the Cézanne show, which has been to New York and Houston and is now in Paris until 23 July, is not coming to London. The show contains some 60 oils and 40 watercolours, all dating from the last 12 years of Cézanne's life. The book published as a companion to the exhibition might seem to be a cheap alternative to the trip to Paris. *Cézanne: The Late Work*, edited by William Rubin (Thames and Hudson £20), includes a catalogue of the American exhibition (some paintings have been subtracted and others added for Paris), a set of essays by Cézanne specialists and 427 illustrations. But although the illustrations give a more comprehensive view of Cézanne's last period than the exhibition, they are no substitute. For Cézanne, as Lawrence Gowing writes in his essay, 'colour contrasts become the internal life of art. He found that painting could make nothing else and needed nothing.' As between the inevitable inadequacy of the black-and-white and the inaccuracy of most of the colour plates there's little to choose. The book can only serve as a valuable *aide-mémoire* and work of reference.

Early in 1894 the young critic Gustave Geffroy wrote an appreciative article about Cézanne; late in 1895 the young art-dealer Ambroise Vollard gave him, at the age of nearly 57, his first one-man exhibition. Cézanne was known and admired by other artists and by one or two collectors; except as an occasional butt for critics, however, he emerged from obscurity only during his last decade when, mostly in Aix-en-Provence and suffering from the diabetes which killed him, he was painting his most revolutionary works. 'I have made some progress,' he wrote to Vollard in 1903. 'Why so late and with such difficulty? Is art really a priesthood that demands the pure in heart who must belong to it entirely?'

For him it was. If, as Gowing concludes, 'his ultimate conception of painting was of an art of rational intelligibility', and if he himself recognised the means of art as 'simply the means of making the public feel what we feel ourselves', there is no great artist who gives more sense of the difficulty of finding those means and using them to his own satisfaction. 'Cézanne,' according to Braque, 'worked away from all the *facilities* that talent gives', and Picasso thought that 'what forces our interest is Cézanne's anxiety'. The strain communicates itself to the spectator: there seem to be three times as many paintings as there really are in this exhibition, since every one demands to be approached from scratch. Although he did many versions of the same motifs they are in no sense variations. Cézanne painted every late oil as if it were his first and last, as if it carried the whole weight of his life's ambition. But he never intended to create difficulties for himself:

> I cannot convey my sensation immediately; so I put colour on again, and I keep putting it on as best I can. But when I begin I always try to paint sweepingly, like Manet, by giving form with the brush.

Vollard endured 115 sittings for his portrait and even then Cézanne was satisfied only with the shirt-front; Geffroy's too – one of the most beautiful things in the exhibition – was unfinished. One view of Mont Sainte-Victoire consists of virtually abstract patches of colour with large areas of black canvas, while another has been so densely painted as to be almost illegible. The most perfectly realised paintings have the appearance of narrowly resolved struggles rather than of effortless mastery.

For relaxation one has to turn to the watercolours, which are not so much sketches or try-outs (every oil being its own try-out) as a kind of second *oeuvre*, the works of another, less agonised Cézanne, for whom painting was a purely pleasurable, lyrical response to nature, a matter of springy lines, white light and dancing, rainbow-coloured clusters of shadow. Even the bathers – the heart of Cézanne's struggles – turn soft and playful in a small watercolour whose dappled blue and green enclose the rococo outlines of the ladies as though they might be only a trick of the wind and light. It is hardly possible to reconcile those insubstantial dryads with the heavy, masked amazons of the National Gallery's *Bathers*. Mercilessly exposed between the harsh diagonals of bare tree-trunks on an ochre ground under a glaring blue sky, their yellow bodies outlined in blue and their hair orange and helmet-like, these seem as threatening and undesirable as Diana and her nymphs seen with the eyes of an Actaeon already turning stag. Some of the poses are common to both oil and watercolour and derive from those very early and crudely erotic figure-paintings, *The Orgy* and *The Temptation of St Anthony*. But whereas the watercolour treats sexual feeling in a natural setting as a *jeu d'esprit*, the monumental oil assimilates it both to nature and to painting in such a way as to insist on the mutuality and mutual frustration of all three. The paintings of male bathers are altogether less charged – reminiscences perhaps of Cézanne's student outings with Zola and Baille in the country round Aix rather

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than struggles to express his present self and his relationship to nature.

The explicit sexual element may be peculiar to the pictures of female bathers, but the most obvious difference between the middle and late works is the increase of sensuality. This is partly because the colours are more intensely contrasted and partly because Cézanne now seems to come right up under his subject – space is above and around him, not stretching away from him. Compare a view of Sainte-Victoire, such as that in the Courtauld Collection, carefully framed by a tree-trunk to the left and floating foliage overhead and spread back under a cool sky, to the one from an American private collection in this show, where the deep blue of the mountain and sky is used in the immediate foreground to create a kind of ditch of shadow (an entrance rather than a frame), while the brilliant green slashed with orange patches beyond is reflected in the sky. Earth, mountain and sky are still distinct, still recognisable, but they now proclaim themselves equally divisions on a two-dimensional canvas and integral parts of a colour symphony.

Cézanne's struggle to create a harmony of paint parallel with that of nature always depended on being true to both, on the subject co-existing with the painter's means of expressing his feeling about it. The artist, he told Joachim Gasquet (whose portrait is also in this exhibition), must 'be a perfect echo', and he spoke of deciphering

> the two parallel texts, nature as seen, nature as felt, the one that is there . . . (he pointed to the green and blue plain), the one that is here . . . (he tapped his forehead), both of which must merge in order to endure, to live a life half human, half divine, the life of art, listen to me . . . the life of God.

On top of all the other changes in his last period, Cézanne had become a devout Catholic. Just as the sexual element in his feeling for nature is made explicit in the series of Bathers, so the religious element is evident in the Château Noir landscapes, especially in the church-like look of the building itself, with its Gothic windows and appearance of floating between trees and sky, an ark or altar raised in silhouette. But even those paintings done in the thick woods round it, which contain no view of the building, imply powerfully, with their massive rocks and tall bare tree-trunks, the interior of some great natural cathedral.

When he died in 1906, Cézanne was working on one of his many portraits of the gardener Vallier. He saw Vallier in three wholly different ways – as a thin, straight, cross-legged figure in a straw hat merging into the foliage behind him almost as if he were part of it; as a watchful but impassive, perhaps faintly devotional, figure in profile against an indeterminate background; and as a broad, dark, overwhelming presence against a rich green ground, the hands like claws, the eyes heavily shadowed under the brim of his peaked cap, the expression at once grim and disinterested. The three versions of this last, Ibsenesque Vallier – old Peer Gynt and the Button-Moulder in one person – hang together at the end of the exhibition, leaving one with an impression of a Cézanne whose life-long anxiety to discover the life of art remained entirely unassuaged by anything he had done.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

No, No, No

I Was Sitting on My Patio This Guy Appeared I Thought I was Hallucinating *Royal Court*
The Ball Game *Open Space*
Big Sin City *Roundhouse*

Robert Wilson is a young American who is big both in Paris and New York, very, very big. One of his recent efforts ran for 12 hours, from sundown to sunrise, and another, believe it or not, lasted rather longer than the creation of the world. On the day God retired to heaven to barbecue a chicken or two, Wilson was still relentlessly at it, pelting out his *Ka Mountain* in what history reports to have been temperatures of up to 120 degrees. But there's no need to take your hard tack biscuits and Bovril tablets to the Royal Court, because his first offering in England is almost rudely brusque by his own standards of endlessness. In fact, *Patio* stretches on for only an hour-and-a-half longer than its title, which is, as it happens, also the first line of the play.

Indeed, the first line of both halves of the play. Long strips of light come up at the back of the stage to reveal Wilson himself, his French-polished hair giving him the oozy allure of a Noël Coward lounge-lizard, draped along a peculiarly angular and uncomfortable chaise-longue. He spends some 10 minutes peering at the audience and rubbing his nose, and then he begins to spout what the programme rather dauntingly describes as 'over 100 short-story fragments':

> The reindeers are getting restless . . . Johnny, Johnny, don't move, you have a snake behind you . . . I was walking in an alley, and I looked to see if they were following me: they were: you're a fool, you can't make it . . . Rosemary, stop slaughtering the air . . . Mrs Rabbit, surely you're not laughing . . . I could be the best lifeguard on the beach if only I could swim . . .

When this, and more, has been delivered to Mr Wilson's satisfaction, on comes his colleague, Lucinda Childs, in black slacks, looking and sounding like the youthful Lauren Bacall. She repeats the very same monologue, word for word, to the sound of a hidden clavicord, while the TV set over her head, which spent Mr Wilson's tenure of the stage relaying shots of penguins, a dog on a sofa and the word 'NO', preoccupies itself with some ducks on a pond.

One might presume that the idea is to dramatise, if not exactly the relativity of truth, at least the distinct slants that two minds can put upon identical data; but, as it turns out, the differences in emphasis between Wilson and Childs are not that marked. She's a bit more diffident, he rather grimmer, but both belt out 'no, no, no, no' with much the same unexplained rage and both hit a bewildering topnote on the line, 'I was sitting in this chair'. The fact is that Wilson's theory and practice of drama are aesthetic, one might say architectural, and in no respect moral. He assembles little clumps of verbiage as in his previous work he pieced together visual images, and it would not vastly matter if you or I substituted an extract from an English phrasebook for foreigners here, a half-remembered snippet from one of our own dreams there, and there a joke from a child's bumper fun book. Many thanks to Michael White, who has at last given us the opportunity to see the legend at close quarters; but there's something about this particular import which my uptight mind finds altogether too arbitrary and random, too lacking in plan or discernible purpose. An evening spent swimming not once but twice round someone's pool of free-associations isn't my idea of stimulation.

As any student of transatlantic four-letterisms will already have guessed, the title of Tom Thomas's comedy at the Open Space doesn't refer only to the baseball skills of the Pittsburgh Pirates, whose supporters are omnipresent offstage, noisily celebrating their team's triumph in the World Series. Balling of another sort is in the air, and on the ground as well. Down from her 25th-floor apartment trots the middle-American wife and mother, and is promptly raped by ten rampaging fans, an incident which greatly ruffles neither her husband nor herself. 'Today hasn't been going too well – if it's not one thing, it's another,' she complains, her apathy contrasting rather sharply with the panic of her best friend, who is trying to pitch herself through the window to her death because her mother-in-law has just had an embarrassing accident in the john. It is all there: the topsy-turvy values and mania for respectability, the propensity to under-react to the big and over-react to the small, the obsession with TV, tranquillisers and consumer durables. Add edginess between father and son, and sexual hostility between husband and wife, and we end with one of those capsule assaults on the American way of life so common eight, ten, twelve years ago. Welcome to US 1968.

Mr Thomas's satire is desperately unoriginal, and, as if recognising this, he plunges the proceedings further and further into farcical whimsy in the second act. Don Parker, playing a bespectacled Clark Kent, sprints on to the window-ledge in a Superman outfit. John Bird, a rabbity host, and Deborah Norton, an adenoidal guest, decide for no clear reason to swap clothes; and Mr Bird, too, is gangbanged on the sidewalk below. Meanwhile, a joke based on the confusion of grass and pot is repeated one, two, three times. It is wild, excited stuff, funny enough at times in its sub-Ortonesque way, but well before the end it is clear that Mr Thomas's ideas have run out of substance, his action out of momentum, and his invention out of breath.

Just for the record, *Coriolanus* and *Plunder*, both of which got this column's imprimatur, reappear at the Aldwych and Lyttelton respectively. And the latest rock-saga, *Big Sin City*, is just for the record, too. At any rate, I was more entertained by the disc the publicity people kindly sent

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me than the story of an English Candide in roughhouse America. This is unsophisticated and inept: a no-no, or, as they put it at the Court, a no, no, *no*, NO.

Television

Julian Barnes

Peaking Early

During the riots in pre-war India, the bodies of those killed used to be tipped into the river. They sank, the inflating gases got to work, and 'traditionally' (in the words of an ex-Bengal river pilot) 'they rose again on the third day'. So, while official casualty figures of hundreds were being given out, you would find yourself, on this riverine resurrection day, piloting a ship through thousands of bloated corpses: 'as you touched them, they exploded like balloons.'

You can always rely on the excellent *Tales of India* series (BBC-2) for at least one such sharply true reminiscence, told in a clipped, humorous way by a retired sahib. But a touch of tarnish on the Imperial crown was particularly apt at a time when we were all, supposedly, celebrating 25 years since the Queen's enthronement. *Where Were You on Coronation Day?* BBC-2's *Network* peremptorily wanted to know. Well, like all embryonic TV critics, I was roughly where I still am: crouched in front of a telly-screen the size of a sugar lump, with a magnifying glass in a standing mahogany frame enlarging the picture to the size of a small en-print. At my feet, I suspect, was a copy of the *Children's Newspaper*, bidding us greet a new Elizabethan age, in which Sir Frank Whittle and his kind would forge links with the first great Elizabethan discoverers. Was any analogy less examined at its birth? Twenty-five wrangling and shoddy years later, we are back where we started: crouched in front of larger, colour tellies, watching replays of the events of 1953. And has any of it changed, apart from an added layer of glutinous nostalgia? On *Fireworks for a Silver Reign* (BBC-2), the crowd outside the Palace seemed just as huge and contented, the royals clockworked dutifully on the balcony, and Ronald Allison, fattened with the insights of a Palace press secretary, prayed the commentary: 'In the centre room, I know . . . the Queen and Prince Philip will be . . . talking and . . . just passing the time before . . . coming out.'

The other thing we celebrated in 1953, while the rain sluiced down Queen Salote, was that we'd climbed Everest. That's what *we* thought, anyway. Alfred Gregory's *The Other Side of the Mountain* (BBC-1) pointed out that the New Zealanders thought *they'd* climbed it; the Nepalese thought *they'd* climbed it; and the Indians, naturally, thought *they'd* climbed it. Why was it so important to us? Jan Morris argued that Everest was considered as an imperial mountain – the last, biggest British peak – and also that the expedition was the last in the tradition of gentlemanly amateurism. The spur to the climbers, she suggested, was not fame but shame: the shame of displaying fear. A plausible theory – but one which, sadly, Gregory didn't try to corroborate; perhaps, in any case, the climbers were too British, too gentlemanly to talk about – or even, perhaps, recognise – their deeper motivations. This was the greatest disappointment of a modest but plodding film ('The yak-dung fire still warms the simple household . . .' etc). As one who's always maintained (often in the face of strong contrary evidence) that exceptionally gifted sportsmen are often highly intelligent as well, I was surprised how straightforward and unexciting the mountaineers seemed. Quiet, discreet, honest, loyal, self-deprecating men: but what drove them, and what were their feelings? Perhaps, after all, there was less in it than met the eye; and no more complex emotions to be had than those revealed by Hillary's first remark on getting back to camp: 'Well, we knocked the bastard off.'

The climbers' most attractive traits were a total lack of chauvinism and an embarrassment at being treated as stars. How different from the sentimental patriotism and raucous star-spotting surrounding Britain's third-best soccer team. The Scots, of course, were meant to be the team with more national fervour than anyone else: all they had to do to sail through their qualifying group, we learned, was to keep their famous 'temperament' under control. ('Temperament', by the way, is part of that flexible soccer lexicon which includes words like 'tenacious'. 'Macari, a tenacious midfield schemer' means that Macari is very small. 'Very tenacious' means very small *and* very dirty. 'Temperament' in this world means the habit of kicking opponents, and is also known, more crudely, as 'dodgy tactics': thus, 'The Hungarians had to retort to dodgy tactics,' resorted John Bond of the BBC panel to Jimmy Hill.) After the defeat by Peru – whose players had shown considerably more national fervour, not least by singing their national anthem with hands on hearts – Ally MacLeod explained, 'The typical Scottish temperament was missing.' Kevin Keegan, offered by Brian Moore (watery-eyed with hopefulness) a scenario whereby Scotland might still qualify, resorted, 'I think you're grovelling at straws'.

So far, the house experts have been the weakest link in the unmitigatedly sublime experience of the World Cup. In previous championships, the BBC sages were bland, the ITV ones temperamental – i.e. Jack Charlton used to kick fellow panellists. This time, with Charlton out in Argentina, ITV are settling for mere expertise (the predictions for the Peru match were: Paddy Crerand 2-0, Andy Gray 2-0, Kevin Keegan 3-0). They are captained by the normally perceptive Keegan, whose most endearing habit is that of gesturing to his head whenever he calls a player 'clever' – just to confirm that footballers keep their brains in the usual place. The BBC team, by contrast, looks as if it has been instructed to quarrel; but this may be merely a by-product of Bob Wilson's growing ego problem. Wilson began his TV career as the gentle professional with the rare qualification of having written a thesis on goalkeeping; the first signs of his proud new querulousness didn't become apparent until his emotional outburst at half-time in the FA Cup Final. Now, in the World Cup, his temperament looks to be giving trouble. He even snapped at the agreeable John Bond, and loftily confided to us after the Italy-France match, 'Well, Italy's always been one of *my* teams, especially now I've got an Italian in the family.'

Sport

Russell Davies

Bombed

Peru beat Scotland fairly and squarely (the 'squarely' part was the Scottish defence's fault), and perhaps it's just as well they did: otherwise, the Willie Johnston drug affair would have resulted in the awarding of the game to Peru by a two-goal (naturally I typed gaol) margin. And then we should have had some even more distressing things to say about the self-destructiveness of the Scottish character. Johnston is merely the current personification of the old question: what is it that makes 'talented professionals' munch pills, punch Danish policemen and cast themselves woozily adrift in open boats whenever they get away from 'hame'? It's a problem, obviously, that has little to do with sport and a great deal to do with sociology. I expect to hear many a shaggy lecturer dwell upon the headiness of the escape from the prospectless life of the Scottish lowlands, and the consequent sense of insecurity; and anyone who has spent any time in urban Scotland knows what very strong links the life there forges between fellowship – 'squad feeling', in World Cup terms – and riotous drinking.

Scotland is clearly not producing managers strong enough to oppose the national ethos with their own. They always seem to be natural riproarers on their own account, like Tommy Docherty, who is, if possible, a pot of even darker hue than the well-sooted kettle Johnston; or worried burghers like Willie Ormond, who, though suitably shocked at his team's midnight excursions on land and sea, was hardly capable of the raging verbal sadism required to put a stop to them. There is a bit of both styles in Ally MacLeod: the easy-going bit, unfortunately, in both cases.

All the same, I have been well sickened by the way the press has turned on MacLeod this week. Everything that made him good copy before is now adduced as evidence of his clownishness. Formerly 'available' and 'amusing', he reappears as a dilettante windbag. His confidence, from which the sports pages gladly borrowed a euphoric tone for their 'Ally's Army' claptrap, suddenly redefines itself as braggartry

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and ill-preparedness. Of course, MacLeod stands accused by his opening result (and conceivably by his second one, which falls beyond my deadline) but only those reporters – and who were they? – who built up Peru into the formidable enemy it is claimed MacLeod should have foreseen are entitled to subject him now to the kind of personal abuse that has been flying homeward over the wires since the weekend.

It would have been gracious of MacLeod, admittedly, to volunteer to take more blame than he publicly did; but even here he would be within his rights to point out that his team failed, in the course of the Peruvian match itself, to learn from experience. Having seen Cubillas score a swerving near-post goal from open play with the 'wrong' foot (according to British convention, whereby a rotten left-foot, left-wing shot will always pass for an adventurous cross), they should have been on maximum guard against his doing exactly the same thing from a free-kick close to the same spot.

As for the penalty, it confirmed the opinion I already held (and dreaded the consequence of) when Flynn came up to take the recent Welsh one against Scotland: namely that spot-kicks should not be entrusted to little midfield artists with ideas of guile and placement. At all levels of football, there is a lot to be said for the penalty with a strong element of brute force about it, provided it can be kept low – besides which, there is a plausible theory that big men, thanks to their length of limb, have a better chance of disguising the destination of the ball during the act of kicking, while small men have to make emphatic movements in order to muster leverage. Not that Scotland deserved the penalty, either on the run of the play or in the specific circumstances in which Rioch was brought down.

Anything I say about the competition prospects of this or any other team will be taken down and made a nonsense of by midweek events, so I will just record that I was glad to miss the opening game, gladder still to see the exhilarating play of the well-disguised Brazilians from Tunisia, and completely stumped as to why Italy started at such long odds. Even the price they have so far shortened to is very attractive, if you like that sort of thing. The best I expect from Scotland (this is the foolhardy bit) is a narrow win over Iran and a draw with Holland, which by then the Dutch may be willing to settle for.

The Test Match gave the expected encouragement to backers of Botham and Gower, but I much disliked the way England achieved their 'breakthrough' on Monday. Willis's intention in going round the wicket to Qasim can only have been to bowl him something he couldn't, with his technique, avoid. Willis's aim was in one sense accurate, therefore, and in the other sense despicable. But the element of chance in all accidents, however willed they are, gives the bowler a squeak of an excuse; so the man whose attitude bothered me most was not Willis but Brearley. Given the opportunity to express some adequate degree of regret after the game, the England captain cared only to give an impression of offhand self-satisfaction. Pakistan were a talented side, he conceded, but 'not as talented as we are', he added, almost hugging himself with the felicity of the remark and of the moment. Rather to my surprise, I found myself beginning to dislike Brearley. He seemed smirky, over-confident of the swell of his own prestige after a sweatless victory. He has ambitions to become a psychoanalyst, so I suppose this may be part of the training.

Music

Andrew Clements

Catching Up

Berkeley *Festival Hall/Radio 3*
Berkeley: Second Symphony *Lyrita* £3.46

Lennox Berkeley's 75th birthday necessarily prompts rather a different kind of public celebration from those awarded to his more illustrious colleagues. The anniversaries of the praised and famous have long since ceased to be occasions for carefully considered reassessments; now they provide only opportunities for critical reassurance, chances to check out received opinion and tidy up any loose ends. But for a composer like Berkeley, more honoured in the word than in the deed, a birthday is perhaps a chance for some recompense. His output is considerable – some 94 opus numbers to date – yet barely a handful of works are at all regularly played: the early Serenade for Strings and the settings of poems of St Theresa d'Avila, the Divertimento and the one-act opera *The Dinner Engagement*. With such a wealth of neglected material any birthday revival runs the risk of at least being partial, if not entirely misleading. Thus the two major Berkeley events of the last month (if one discounts the composer's appearance on *Desert Island Discs*) have both been symphonic – the premiere of the Fourth Symphony (by the RPO conducted by Groves) and the release of a recording of the recently revised Second – yet he is surely not one of the first to spring to mind when British symphonists are mentioned. The form must be the greatest sacred cow of British music – from the palpitations caused when Maxwell Davies produced his Symphony a few months ago, you'd have thought he'd renewed the form single-handed – and its reputations are zealously protected and vociferously championed; Berkeley, however, is hardly ever cited in its defence.

He is perhaps less a 'symphonist' than a composer who has worked in a variety of forms and just happens to have produced four symphonies. His musical thinking is not naturally cast in that way: it generally lacks the necessary grasp of long-range organisation. His pieces are always civilised, neat and elegantly neoclassical; every note is exactly weighted as to its effect and balance, every detail of the orchestration fastidiously imagined. An early enthusiasm for Ravel has left its mark, yet the dismissive label of 'Francophile' applied to Berkeley for many years now seems less an accurate description of his technique that an indication of how narrow were the prescribed limits of English music 20 or 30 years ago. His most serious musical training was indeed in France: through Ravel he met Nadia Boulanger, studied with her for five years and was irretrievably caught up in neoclassicism. His early style was an unashamed mixture of Stravinsky and *Les Six*; gradually these influences were absorbed, yet without ever losing the cardinal neoclassical virtues of taste and polish.

Only in the last decade, since the Third Symphony, has Berkeley's music become more muscular. The Third was short (15 minutes), cast in a single movement and sharply etched in terms of conflicting tonalities and a concentrated thematicism. Subsequent works may not have been quite so uncompromising, but they differ markedly from their predecessors. To my ears at least it's this difference that makes the new Fourth Symphony far more attractive than the Second (written in 1956-7 and revamped two years ago). Illusory or not, the later work suggests an emotional depth where the Second is content to offer only bland assertion. The Fourth is in three movements, basically fast-slow-fastish, though the central movement is an expansive, wide-ranging theme and variations, and the first movement proper is preceded by a short slow introduction which unrolls an eight-note motive and supplies all the subsequent

This English

Insensitive word-juxtaposition does not necessarily constitute solecism, but we shall occasionally penalise the habit all the same (besides, Len Hutton here combines it with his usual complement of slips). Three of these, plus a rogue apostrophe and a curious howler from Mr Alan Watkins who, in the space of only a few words, manages to say the opposite of what he means twice. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard, please.

☐ I do not wish to distract from fine bowling of Old, who, as long as he can keep free from injury, will give any batsman trouble, even of the highest class. But the batsmen contributed considearably [*sic*] to their own failure, and wi [*sic*] continue to do so if they will persist in sitting on their back foot. **Sir Leonard Hutton** *Observer* (Mervyn Jones)

☐ Lynn Redgrave: thinks her sister made a dumb speech. **Caption** *Glasgow Herald* (J. Belford)

☐ They want a united force of Government, religious bodies and women's clubs to work hand in hand on circumcision. **Kenya Diary** (Cynthia Pinto)

☐ NOW IN IT'S SECOND PRINTING! **Hodder & Stoughton Advertisement** *The Times* (Mrs K. Macintyre)

☐ This is the delusion that the natural processes of ageing and decay can somehow be averted or reversed. Those who strive too strenuously to prolong their mortality may end by losing it. **Alan Watkins** *Observer* (Jill Cramphorn)

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thematic material. Tonalities are always clearly defined but with occasional surprises, like the twist into a remote key for the first movement coda.

As always with Berkeley, the music fits together well, its proportions exact. Yet even the Fourth Symphony seems to me to fail to produce any sort of clinching finale, and this leaves the listener ultimately frustrated. Berkeley may abhor bombast and the typical peroration of the Romantic symphony, but his retreat into understatement in a musical form so essentially public is self-defeating: the listener is always kept at arm's length. Curiously, the only work of Berkeley's I know that produces a more involving intensity is the religious fervour of the St Theresa settings. His work is evidently highly personal, and not, therefore, ideally suited to the symphony. If his 75th year elicits performances of some of his smaller-scale pieces, it may give us a rather more precise view of one of our lesser-known senior figures, whose virtues seem less valued in the Seventies than they might have been 30 years ago.

Films

John Coleman

In the Neck

Le Sheriff (AA) *Gala, Edgware Road*
I, Pierre Rivière, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister and My Brother *Arnolfini Cinema, Bristol, from 13 June*
Repast *NFT*

Not much, clearly, for home comfort, but some interesting stuff nevertheless. Yves Boisset's *Le Sherriff* is based on actuality, the killing of a French examining magistrate (we do not, to my knowledge, have the equivalent over here: he is something between a cop and a judge) in Lyon in 1975. He had apparently got himself involved, well over his neck, in judicial concerns touching on high, raw areas. Boisset himself ran into a lot of trouble making his film, even though he made the crusader in question much younger than the real victim and also changed the geography of it all a bit. The nearest one can come to suggesting the sort of movie that has resulted is to mention Francesco Rosi, whose semi-documentary explorations of the politically unpalatable – Italian-style – have rendered him as a naughty, if notable word. The hero of Boisset's piece is one Jean-Marie Fayard (Patrick Dewaere giving a sympathetic performance under a moustache and reminding one rather of that excellent American actor, Stacy Keach, in his unmannered decency – very hard to bring off but essential for Boisset's purposes): he comes on, basically, like a Gallic chunk of moral worth out of our own *Sweeney*. That is probably why I have reservations about an affair as efficient and sensible and – for want of *le mot propre* – proper as *Le Sheriff*. It is a little flash.

Fayard finds himself up against the Establishment. I capitalise because the story-line encourages it: there is chatter of the Doctor, the Captain, the Manor, and a figure formidably behind all these cognomens, a certain monsieur Paul. Fayard starts out via a technically simple case, some business of a negligent factory director. He is rapidly into headier messes. A small, local larceny – the hold-up of a garage-owner – leads him into investigating the activities of a hugely organised gang of villains who rob vans carrying quantities of bank-notes. He is both encouraged to proceed with his wild inquiries (which take in such picturesque places as a nightclub-cum-brothel) and warned off. A nice perplexity is here established. Men at the top are trapped just by being there and Boisset – like Rosi – is extraordinarily good at communicating this: the stench of power, the flavour of corruption. Being French, as opposed to English, the director naturally implants all kinds of political doubts, inferences, throw-backs to old martial loyalties: some of the bad men were good buddies during the Algerian matter, for instance. He also contrives a throbbingly accurate love-life for Fayard. She is called Michelle, is played by Aurore Clément, and lifts the occasion into life when it most needs it. The man was nicknamed The Sheriff, by the way, because he was an ethical loner – and there is also that French adoration of Westerns.

I, Pierre Rivière and so on is some way from being the best film to emerge from René Allio (*La Vieille Dame Indigne*), but has its steady fascinations. Again, we have something founded on the truth. On 3 June 1835 a Normandy peasant killed his mother, sister and brother with a billhook. Evidently a nutter of some kind, he wrote in jail a 50-page account of how and why. Allio, with the assistance of several other wordsmiths, has decided to play it very cool. There is a lot of voice-over, taken from the Rivière document, and there are a lot of impressive framings: almost too many, in fact. It is genial and even pleasurable to feel oneself capable of stopping the camera here and there for an, as it were, visual inhalation, but Allio rather overdoes it. There is an awkward point where a movie can become too handsome for its own good: it calls the wrong kind of attention to itself. Rembrandt, Dutch interiors – they got in the way of a strange, Oedipal story.

Here, it would seem, the young man (finely found in Claude Hebert) was more in love with his father, who was surely hard done by. His unpleasant, peasant mum harried her wretched husband in every available way. The amazing thing was that she went to bed with him often enough to produce the son and his scythe-fodder. All credit to Allio, though, who must surely have been influenced a shade at least by Truffaut's superb *L'Enfant Sauvage* in composing this remarkably 'structured' picture, for packing so much of the feel of the earth and those who live off it into it.

'Unknown Masters of Japanese Cinema': the gag is hard to resist after seeing Mikio Naruse's 1951 *Repast* – why shouldn't they be? The season, running at the National Film Theatre from now till 29 June, looks promising, in truth. It is merely that the Naruse, unhappily but temptingly transliterating as *Meshi* from the original Japanese, looks something else: knee-level Hollywood. There is this sweet, bored wife and there is a winsome, wilful visiting niece (I think) and there is a gentle, quite Occidental – I nearly typed accidental – husband: the men are not at all Nippon in appearance. Frankly, it might be shown around film schools as a quiz. Did that shot come from Capra? that line from Dudley Nichols on a bad day? that score from Mickey Mouse?

Tom Disch

The Wounded Barbarian

Europe the second time is a rack
of postcards and a conversation
about money that goes on till 2 a.m.
Sidewalks, rain, a nonstop
Utrillo painting and the same
conversation continuing
past the fronts of shops that sell
nothing but postcards complaining
about the weather and the cost
of even the most ordinary defeat.

Weekend Competition

No 2518 **Set by Ms de Meaner**

Higgledy-piggledy
Heliogabalus
Lurched through the Forum, his
Bottom a-wag,

Vainly pretending to
Gynaecological
Problems beneath his Im-
Perial drag.

Thus the Double Dactyl, a form invented by Anthony Hecht and John Hollander. The rules are strict: two quatrains, the last lines of which rhyme; all the lines (except the truncated rhyming ones) are composed of two dactyls. The first line is a nonsense-line (usually 'Higgledy-piggledy', but it can be different – 'Jiggery-pokery'; 'Fiddlesky-diddlesky'); the second consists of a double-dactylic name (Vladimir Nabokov, Marcus Aurelius, Josephine Bonaparte); and somewhere in the second stanza, preferably in the antepenultimate line, there is a line of

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a single word. Subject-matter (as with the limerick and clerihew) is of a biographical-historical-critical nature:

Higgledy-piggledy
Dorothy Richardson
Wrote a huge book with her
Delicate muse

Where (though I hate to seem
Uncomplimentary)
Nothing much happens and
Nobody screws.

We're sure you'll master the form fairly quickly; all too quickly, perhaps, so a maximum of four entries each. By 23 June.

Result of No 2515 Set by B. Mooring

We asked for speeches from Shakespeare's lost history plays.

Report by Little Keith

No room for me this week: it's all gone to *her*. Bitch. A Wellington plus two Newtons to each of the winners.

Richard Coeur-de-Lion

A Castle in Austria: Richard's quarters.
Richard: Let luckless John drudge out
the care of kings,
While I, high Austria's guest, sequester'd here,
With feast and frolic, dalliance and wine,
Yet longer piece my most protractive stay.
Though not incarcerate, I have it nois'd
Abroad that I am so, lest busy Albion's
Sleek burgesses should chide my duty scanted –
For nothing irks the sluggard English so
As looking on at others' idleness.
All vacancy I'll cram with authorship
And badge myself a very Alexander –
The merest dolts all gen'rals else. To long
Crusades, long cross'd by fate, what meeter end
Than crucifying fellow captain's fame?
A hideous twanging and caterwauling without.
Alack! Doth raucous punk pursue me yet?
He pokes head through aperture.
Thy din belt up, most unmelodious knave –
Of thy rude strings pray leave the plucking off!
Blondel: At last, my sovereign prince,
my warblings wild
Have found thee out! Fear not, most
honey lord –
My tidings sped, thou shalt be
ransom'd straight.
He hurries off.
Richard: Behold in this the scourge of
modern days:
Where busybodies bide, thou canst not win.
COLIN KIMBERLEY

King Canute

The coast near Southampton. Enter, from royal barge, Canute, courtiers and Fool.
Fool: 'Tis clear, Great Dane, thy barque's
worse than thy bite.
Canute: Once more unto the beach, dear
friends, once more –
Fool: A line, methinks, too good to
throw away,
'Twill soon be echoed in another play.
Canute: – For now I needs must show
these slavering curs
That e'en Canute cannot roll back the sea.
Fool: Canute cannot? Cannot Canute?
For shame!
Canute: Cease, fool. We at the mighty
ocean's marge,
Exchanging throne for deck-chair for
the nonce,
Shall thus disport, paddling our royal feet.
Fool: Nay, if it please thee, paddle thine
own, Canute,
And get thy breeches wet into the bargain,
But why not summon statecraft to thine aid
And make a secret compact with the moon?
Sit tight until the tide is on the turn,
Then it would seem as though thy
royal command,
'Back, waters, back', had wrought a miracle.
Canute: Verily, my boy, thou'rt on the ball.
Fool: On land or sea, good sire, timing is all.
Canute: Henceforth I'll hear no ill spoken
of fools.
Fool: Thou rul'st the waves; my task's to
waive the rules.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

King Ethelred the Unready

Ethelred: This cankered earth, this murrain'd
patch of land
Infected by the malady of machinations, plots
Hatched in the hangman's shadow –
(*Enter a messenger.*)
Well?
Messenger: My Lord, The queen requests –
Ethelred: I am not ready, goose.
Leave presently. (*Exit messenger*)
What was my theme? Ah yes,
The agu'd frame of state and soul alike,
Their fragile course through time that
rusts apace
Like blades sheathed fast in scabbards
long unused,
Or targets hung as pictures –
(*Alarums. Enter a soldier.*)
Now what?
Soldier: Sir, Your army is suborn'd and
craves your presence.
Ethelred: Out, knave! I'm not yet ready.
(*Exit soldier*)
Life's no more
Than a wastrel player crouching by his glass
That mocks his silly passion for himself,
Strangling his sight –
(*Enter the Witan, severally*)
What is it now? You curs
That cannot let a prince deliver words
Or finish a soliloquy in peace.
I'm just not ready. Hence! (*Exit the Witan*)
This monstrous world
Mired in the reeking dung of wolves, bewrayed
By gods who wreak injurious fate, as if
Our penitence was gall –
Enter seventy-two murderers
Not ready yet,
I've told you, dogs: now list these
jewelled lines
And glean their poetry. I' the old adage lies
The motto thus: Ripeness is all. But that's
Not it. Why should I play the Saxon fool,
And fall upon mine sword, when I'm
not ready?
BILL GREENWELL

King John Part Two

Another part of the sea-shore. Enter the Bishop of Ely and clown.
Clown: Marry, 'tis a very vile piss-pot of a sea that can so affront the King, and thy sea shall rue it.
Ely: My see is all upon dry land, sirrah.
Clown: And that is the sort of sea to have. This sea is as wet as the Great Bed of Ware after the old knight had slept therein. Marry, it means to wash my feet also.
Ely: Indeed it is the Wash. But fear not, for the tide is on the turn.
Clown: Then my feet, not being tired, can run away from his vile Wash that thinks that can wash righter than the King. Hold, see the sea doth not know thy rides, thou naughty bishop, for am I not now the owner of two very wet legs?
Ely: Come, bring me where the King lies.
Clown: Marry, will I though it is thou that lieth about the sea and not the King.
MAUD GRACECHURCH

Tony Miles

Chess

No 86 **Las Palmas: 2**

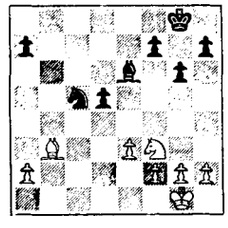
My play often seems to produce a high number of interesting endgames and the Las Palmas tournament was no exception. Of my six wins, no fewer than four were decided at that stage.

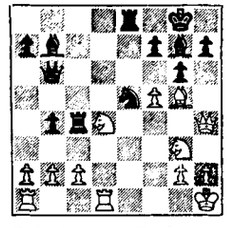
The best two came in the first and last rounds. The first, against Panchenko, was awarded the prize for the best played ending.

White: V. Panchenko Black: A. J. Miles

1. P-K4, P-QB4; 2. N-KB3; P-K3; 3. P-Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, P-QR3; 5. N-QB3, Q-B2; 6. B-K2, P-QN4; 7. 0-0, B-N2; 8. B-B3, N-QB3; 9. R-K1, B-Q3! 10. P-KN3. On 10. N x N, P x N gives Black an easy game, while 10. KN-NP? loses to P x N; 11. N x P, B x Pch; 12. K-R1, Q-N3! **10. . . . N x N; 11. Q x N, B-K4; 12. Q-Q3, N-K2; 13. B-N2, 0-0; 14. P-B4?!** Better is 14. B-Q2. **14. . . . B x N; 15. Q x B** (or 15. P x B, KR-B1 with slight advantage to Black). **15. . . . Q x Q; 16. P x Q, KR-B1; 17. B-R3, K-B1; 18. R-K3, R-B5!** Tying White down to the defence of K4 and QR2 (R-R5); **19. P-N4!** The only chance of counterplay. **19. . . . K-K1! 20. P-N5.** If 20. R-R3, P-R3 is good. **20. . . . QR-B1; 21. B-N4, P-Q4! 22. B x N.** If 22, P x P, N x P should win. **22. . . . P-Q5!** The decisive zwischenzug: on 23. P x P, K x B regains the pawn with a winning ending. So **23. R-R3, K x B; 24. R x P, R x P! 25. R x P, R x P!** The point of the combination, begun five moves ago, is that White now has terrible trouble salvaging his rook. The immediate threat is K-B1 followed by R x Bch. And on 26. B-B3, K-B1; 27. R-R7, R(1)-B6 wins (R-KB1, R x B); If 26. B-R1, R-B8ch, or 26. R-K1, R-B8; 27. R x R (or K-B1, P-Q6) R x Rch; 28. K-B2, R-B7ch and R x B. **26. P-N6.** 26. P-B5 meets the same fate. 26. . . . R x Bch; 27. K x R, B x Pch and B x P. **26. . . . R x Bch; 27. K x R, B x Pch; 28. K-N3, B x P; 29. R-Q1, R-Q1; 30. P-B5.** There is no answer to K-B3. **30. . . . P x P; 31. R-QB1, K-B3; 32. R x Bch, P x R; 33. R-B6ch, K-K4 Resigns.**

My last round game, against Mariotti, was rather uneventful for the first 30 moves. In the diagram position I (White) have some advantage primarily due to Black's isolated QP, though his weakened K-side also offers some encouragement. Play continued **1. N-Q4, K-B1; 2. K-B1, P-QR4; 3. K-K2, K-K1; 4. B-B2! K-Q2; 5. P-KR4.** Preparing to undermine the K-side. Now or next move Black should try P-R3. **5. . . . K-Q3; 6. P-B3, B-B1; 7. P-R5, B-R3ch; 8. K-Q2, B-B8; 9. P-N4, N-K3;** A surprising decision, but it is hard to find a plan against White's general advance. **10. N x N, K x N; 11. P-R6, B-N4; 12. P-B4, B-Q2; 13. K-B3, K-Q3; 14. P-N5, K-B4; 15. P-R3, B-B1?** At the adjournment I established that passive play would lose: eg 15. . . . B-B3; 16. P-B5! B-K1 (forced); 17. P-B6! K-Q3; (if B-Q2, B x P); 18. K-Q4, B-Q2; 19. B-N3, B-K3 (or B-B3, P-K4); 20. B-R4, B-B4; 21. B-K8, B-K3; 22. P-R4! etc. Black's only chance lies in 15. . . . B-B4! and if 16. B-R4 (B x B, P x B; 17. K-Q3, K-Q3! draws) P-Q5ch! 17. P x Pch, K-Q4. **16. B-R4, B-B4; 17. B-K8, P-Q5ch!?** A last trick. On . . . B-K3; 18. P-B5! P x P; 19. P-N6! BP x P wins. **18. P x Pch, K-Q4; 19. B x Pch, K-K5; 20. P-Q5! K x P; 21. B x P! Resigns** (Primarily out of shock). Of course . . . B x B 22. P-Q6, B-K1, 23. P-N6 is straightforward, but . . . B-Q2; 22. B x P, K x P; 23. K-Q4, K x P; **24. B-Q3** is more lengthy, but still winning.





Problem 86

Black to play. How should the game go? Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 21 June.

Solution to Problem 84

1. P-QN4! N x B (relatively best is 1. . . . N x RP losing the exchange for a pawn); 2. P x N, Q-K2 (Others allow either P-N5, B-N6 or P x NP); 3. P-N5, RP x P; 4. RP x P, B-Q2; 5. B-B6! trapping the Queen.

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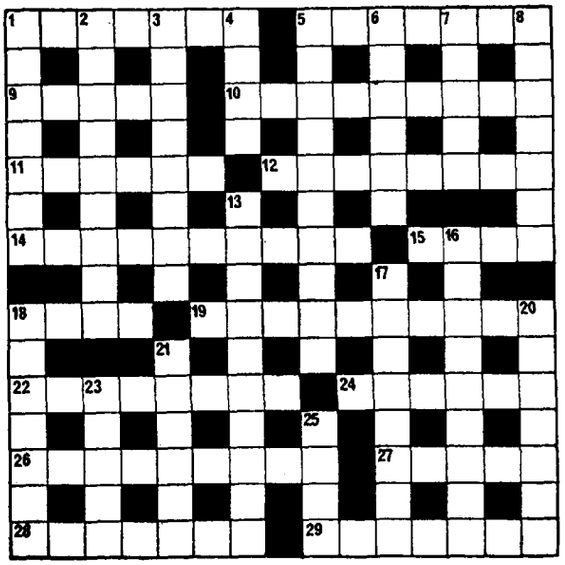
Weekend Crossword 1265

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1265, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 20 June.



ACROSS

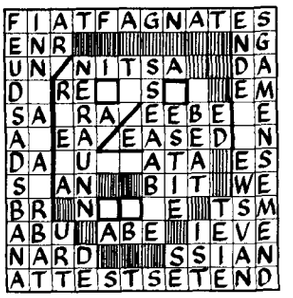
1. The bloody newspaper returned and had a leading article falsified (7).
5. Punctual but tiny one among insects (7).
9. Somebody holding a thousand in capital (5).
10. Bird gets a little hot in giving a friend something to climb in by (9).
11. 'Oh Sleep! it is a —— thing' (Coleridge) (6).
12. Omitting exercise (8).
14. Having lots of seeds it may make women alter (10).
15. Back a vehicle where selling is done (4).
18. About time we had a champion! (4).
19. Place for example in the passage (10).
22. Places for picking workers (8).
24. Wearing a hat, having tried a large number (6).
26. Sad about a bird establishing fatherhood (9).
27. Colouring matter used for decoration in mineral (5).
28. Finish with love and marry the wealthy (7).
29. The rest are disturbed by a shot from a crook (7).

DOWN

1. City which has light without gas being distributed (7).
2. Meditated by using a true mind (9).
3. Man of property who is the opposite of amusing about cockney worker (8).
4. Men appear before these hollows in hills (4).
5. Dark poet holds love to be something to write on (10).
6. Penniless vagrants would be reverse of well-dressed (6).
7. I walk upside down, being an antipodean (5).
8. Dexterity keeps the French in view (7).
13. Athlete's recovery ensures his turn comes after short time (6, 4).
16. Where it is not cool under the trees (9).
17. Plant which makes struggle round border (8).
18. Delight of the tiny, holding a toy (7).
20. If it lost a point, the animal would look more embarrassed (3, 4).
21. Town of rod and line (6).
23. Referred to in an explicit editorial comment (5).
25. Runs even without word of agreement (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 6



Prizewinners to Salamanca 6

J. Wilkie (Rutherglen)
Alison Bye (Stockholm)
Peter Cargill (Kirkcaldy)

APPOINTMENTS

GREATER LONDON ARTS ASSOCIATION

wishes to appoint an

Assistant Director

Following internal reorganisation, a new post of Assistant Director has been created replacing two existing senior appointments. Sharing with the Director the creation and implementation of policies for the development of the arts in Greater London, the Assistant Director will carry specific responsibility for two areas. Firstly, for the co-ordination of policy towards regional arts centres and activities involving several arts disciplines; and secondly, for the supervision of GLAA's finance, administration and membership, and for staff direction in these areas.

The successful candidate will be expected to make a major contribution to the future development of the Association, and salary and conditions reflect the appointment of a senior arts administrator.

Salary scale: £5,644-£6,844 (including London Weighting Allowance). Further details and application forms from:

David Pratley, Director, Greater London Arts Association, 25/31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SF. Closing date: 30 June 1978.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Applications are invited for the post of Administrative Officer of a T.U.C.-affiliated Trade Union of approximately 40,000 members.

The successful applicant for this new post will be responsible to the General Secretary for the co-ordination of all administrative departments and, in addition to carrying out the personnel management function, will be responsible for all buildings, equipment and stores, and will undertake other general administrative duties. Experience in each of the above functions will be an advantage.

Salary will be on a scale commencing at £7,926 per annum.

Application forms, FOR RETURN BY 15 JULY 1978, can be obtained from **The General Secretary, The Merchant Navy & Airline Officers' Association, 750-760 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3BB.**

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Applications are invited for the post of Head of a small Research Department in a T.U.C.-affiliated Trade Union of over 40,000 members.

The successful applicant will be expected to initiate research projects and generally assist in the development of the Union

It is anticipated that the Interviewing Committee will consider the following to be of advantage:

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2. Practical experience in maritime or civil aviation industries.
3. Academic qualifications.

Salary will be not less than £7,000 per annum

Application forms, FOR RETURN BY 15 JULY 1978, can be obtained from **The General Secretary, The Merchant Navy & Airline Officers' Association, 750-760 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3BB.**

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Applications are invited for the following posts:

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TO BE BASED IN BRADFORD/BIRMINGHAM

£3,771-£4,248—(JNC/AP Scales)

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COMMUNITY ARTS DIRECTOR—£3,300

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An interesting, responsible job in a busy office. Varied work involving contacts with individuals and organisations from all parts of the country. Patience and secretarial skills are essential.

Applications should reach the office by 19 June, 1978

Please contact: Ravi Jain, National Asssociation of Indian Youth, 46 High Street, Southall, Middlesex. Telephone: 01-574 1325/6/7.

ADMINISTRATOR/ASSISTANT EDITOR

Salary — £3,000 p.a.

required for Ceolfrith Press, the small press publishing house of Sunderland Arts Centre. Please write or telephone in the first instance for job-description and further information about the Press and its publications to:

R. Stephen Wright, Executive Director, Sunderland Arts Centre, 17 Grange Terrace, Stockton Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR2 7DF. (Tel: 0783 41214).

Closing date for applications: Friday 23 June 1978.

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A S T M S

requires

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Applications are invited for the following post:
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The appointee will be required to teach courses in Administrative Theory and Techniques and Administrative Principles and Practices for the Diploma and Certificate Programmes in Public Administration and to contribute towards the teaching of a new course, *Decision Theory* and Issues of Public Policy, for the B.Sc. Public Administration degree. He/she will also be expected to assist in the teaching of Public Administration at the postgraduate level. Preference will be given to applicants who combine academic qualifications with appropriate administrative experience. The appointee would be expected to assume duties by 1 October 1978.

Salary scales: Lecturer - J$8,913-J$13,919 p.a. Assistant Lecturer - J$7,236 - J$7,926 p.a. (£1 sterling = J$2.81). F.S.S.U. Study and Travel Grant. Unfurnished accommodation will be let by the University at 10% of salary, or a housing allowance of 20% of salary will be paid. Up to five full passages (at approved rates) on appointment and on normal termination. Detailed applications (2 copies) with curriculum vitae and naming three referees should be sent as soon as possible to the REGISTRAR, UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, MONA, KINGSTON 7, JAMAICA. APPLICANTS RESIDENT IN THE UK SHOULD SEND ONE COPY TO INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL, 90/91 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON W1P 0DT. FURTHER DETAILS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM EITHER ADDRESS.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

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Further particulars from The Secretary, The University, Aberdeen, with whom applications (2 copies) should be lodged by 30 June 1978.

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Requires

2 SECRETARIES

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DIRECTOR

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Application forms can be obtained from: The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JA. Tel: 01-834 9434.

The closing date for applications is Friday, 30 June, 1978.

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 95 No. 2464

Contents

758 **Political Notes:** SALT talks; Cyprus; SNP

760 **Stephen Jessel:** Mobutu — Is he a Moderate?

761 **Tony Craig & Anna Coote:** East London's Dockland

762 **David Ross:** Will Britain Miss out on Wave Power?

766 **Christopher Hitchens:** Lebanon — Scorpions in a Bottle

769 **Ian Black:** Land Grabbing on the West Bank

770 ***Delusions of Grandeur*** in Sri Lanka

771 **John Mortimer:** London Diary

772 **Arthur Marshall:** Here We Go Again

773 **Letters to the Editor**

Books & Arts

775 **Clive James:** The Nixon Memoirs

779 **Richard Cobb:** Montaillou

781 **James Fenton:** Light Verse

Other reviews by George MacDonald Fraser, John Keegan, A.J.P. Taylor, Philip Larkin, Zahir Jamal, Alan Ryan, John Sturrock, Valentine Cunningham

791 **John Spurling:** Art

792 **Benedict Nightingale:** Theatre

793 **Julian Barnes:** Television

793 **Russell Davies:** Sport

794 **Andrew Clements:** Music

795 **John Coleman:** Films

795 **Weekend Competition**

796 **Chess**

797 **Crossword**

Poems by Vernon Scannell, Ted Walker, Tom Disch

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Meetings

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USSR 'vigil' for Orlov and other prisoners of conscience. Sat 10 June, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, 12-1 p.m. Speakers include Professor Bernard Crick & Tom Conteh.

'MAY DAY 1978'. Report from delegate to Albania's celebrations. Conway Small Hall, Red Lion Sq., Holborn. 7.30 p.m. Friday 9 June.

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Jo Richardson on 'Abortion Law Reform', 14 June 8 p.m. At the House of Commons. All welcome.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, Blind Lane, Bourne End, Bucks: Sun. 11 June, Swami Bhavyananda on 'The Gospel of Divine Love' at 4 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 50p.

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